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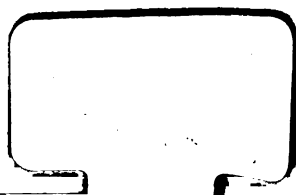
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PRACTICAL THEOLOGY;

COMPRIZING

DISCOURSES

ON THE

LITURGY AND PRINCIPLES OF THE UNITED CHURCH
OF ENGLAND AND IRELAND;

CRITICAL AND OTHER TRACTS;

AND

A SPEECH

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF PEERS,
IN THE YEAR MDCCCXIV.

BY

JOHN JEBB, D.D. F.R.S.

LATE BISHOP OF LIMERICK, ARDFERT AND AGHADOE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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TO
THE PROTECTOR OF HIS YOUTH,
AND
THE FRIEND OF HIS MATURER YEARS,
TO THE HONOURABLE
RICHARD JEBB,
SECOND JUSTICE OF THE COURT OF KING'S BENCH
IN IRELAND,

THESE VOLUMES
ARE INSCRIBED,
BY
AN ATTACHED BROTHER.

MARCH XVII. MDCCCXXX.

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DISCOURSE I.

SAINT MATTHEW, xiii. 18.

HEAR YE, THEREFORE, THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER.

It is my purpose, in the following discourse, to bring before you a few plain observations on the parable of the Sower : which parable I shall first repeat, in the words of Saint Matthew the Evangelist.

“ Behold a sower went forth to sow ; and, when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way-side ; and the fowls came, and devoured them up. Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth ; and, forthwith, they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth ; and, when the sun was up, they were scorched ; and, because they had no root, they withered away. And some fell among thorns ; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them. But other fell into good ground ; and brought forth fruit, some an hundred-

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fold, some sixty-fold, some thirty-fold. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."

This parable our blessed Lord himself was pleased to explain ; and it shall be my effort, to follow his footsteps, at an humble distance.

The sower, is our Lord Jesus Christ ; the seed, is the heavenly doctrine of Christianity ; the soil, is the human heart ; the different kinds of soil, and different degrees of produce, represent the various manners, in which, various dispositions will receive religious truth ; the four varieties of soil, all partaking of the seed sown, represent four classes of men, all partakers of religious instruction. And here, it may be observed, that our Lord describes the very lowest class, as hearing the word ; we may, therefore, conclude, that none deserve the name of Christians, who habitually neglect attending public worship. It is, also, worthy of attention, that none of them are accused of any decided profligacy, of any downright wickedness ; we must therefore, at least, conceive them to be of decent, orderly conversation. Whatever instructions, therefore, are drawn from this parable, must be applicable, not to persons absolutely wicked and profane, but to regular and respectable people ; who, whatever are their faults, would be shocked at the charge of disregarding their eternal salvation. Yet

whether such hearers regard that salvation as they ought, we shall in some degree, be enabled to judge, as we proceed.

I. The first, and lowest class, is represented by the way-side.

Suppose to yourselves a hard, and beaten foot-path, in the midst of a prepared fallow. It is evident, that any seed which falls there, cannot penetrate the ground, on account of the hardness; it may, indeed, remain for a time on the surface; but it can find no entrance into the soil beneath; and the fowls of the air will soon come, and devour it up. And so it is, with multitudes who profess and call themselves Christians. They hear the word indeed; they attend public worship; they drag their bodies to the church, but they leave their hearts behind them. The prayers, which are offered up, in behalf of them, and of all God's people; the Scriptures, which are read from the reading-desk, and the communion table; the instructions, which God's ministers deliver from the pulpit, out of God's holy word,—strike upon their ears indeed, but never reach their hearts and minds; they can penetrate such hearts and minds, as little, as the seed, in the parable, can penetrate the high-way. And what is the cause? It is because their hearts are hardened; it is because they

feel no interest in what is said ; it is because they have never given themselves time to think, that religion is the present, instant, serious, business of their lives. The reading of the Scriptures, they merely regard as part of the appointed service of the church ; for they never consider, that it should be their great effort to hear those holy scriptures with meekness, and to receive them with pure affection, as God's own appointed means of saving their souls alive. The preaching of God's ministers, again, they consider a regular, and decent practice ; but they never dream of listening to a sermon, as a matter in which they have any personal concern ; much less, of treasuring it up, for the improvement of their hearts, and for the regulation of their future conduct. And what is the consequence ? Their memories, indeed, may carry away some small portion of what they hear : but what is any truth, however important, to him that careth not for it, that layeth it not to heart ? Such truths cannot long remain, even on the surface : as the fowls of the air, devour up the seed scattered on the way side,—so, the Devil, the prince of the power of the air, will catch away those words of truth, which may fall upon the memory of a careless hearer.

My brethren, are there any such hearers among *you* ? Let me intreat you, ere it be too late, to

reflect upon the things which belong unto your peace. The time is short: it is now called to-day: but the night soon cometh, in which no man may work. We must all lie down in our graves: some of us, possibly, in a few months, in a few weeks, in a few days; nay, which of us is sure of a single hour? (1) But the present moment is our own; let us, then, give it unto God; let us give it unto God, with our whole hearts, and we shall be unspeakably rewarded. One well-spent moment, one thought affectionately devoted to our Maker, may be the commencement of a new life; and that life, the introduction to a happy eternity. May the good God open your hearts, to receive his own good seed. So shall that wicked one, not be permitted to catch it away. And, for yourselves, I would say,—“To-day, if you will hear God’s voice, harden not your hearts:” and then, your Almighty and most merciful Father, will “take away the heart of stone, and give you an heart of flesh.”

II. But it is not enough to hear the word, with attention; or, even, with some degree of pleasure and enjoyment. And this will be manifest, from a consideration of the second class of hearers; of those, who receive the seed into stony places.

If seed falls upon a rock, covered with a thin,

light sprinkling of earth, it will spring up rapidly. The very shallowness of the soil, will ensure this rapidity of growth: having no room to strike root downward, the seed must throw a stem upward, but that stem will never reach its proper maturity: from want of depth, from want of moisture, and from the parching heat of the sun, it will dry up, and wither away, long before the time, when, under more favourable circumstances, it might have been expected to yield an abundant produce.

And so it is with many who think themselves religious. They have hearts that are easily, and quickly, but not deeply, and solidly, affected. They receive, indeed, *some* religious impressions; but why do they receive them? Simply, because they are unable, either to comprehend, or to feel, the entire force, and extent of the truths, which are read from the Scriptures, or delivered from the pulpit. If they were aware, of all that religion calls upon them to part with, and of all that it enjoins them to do, they would not, then, be so forward in their profession. They hear the word with joy; they receive it with alacrity; perhaps, with serious feeling; but they have no root in themselves, no steadiness, no solidity; and what is the consequence? They believe, indeed, for a time; but, when tribulation, or persecution,

or temptation, ariseth, they fall away; they forsake their religion; they become as the showy, but unprofitable herbage, which is the quick growth of a rocky ground. With such persons, religion is a pleasant subject to talk about: but, when the hour of trial comes; when there is occasion for a religion, not of words, but of principles, of feelings, and of conduct, these fair-weather Christians are altogether at a loss: they have no principle within, to guard the sacredness of duty; and the frown of a puny mortal, puts to flight the terrors of the invisible God. Is it a question, whether they shall suffer in worldly reputation, or violate the dictates of their conscience? The silly murmur of a day, will outweigh the applauses of eternity. Is it a question, whether they shall pardon an injury, or indulge their feelings of resentment? The world, and its maxims, will prevail, though Christ expressly tells them, that, if they forgive not their brother, neither will their heavenly Father forgive them. And thus it is, in every season of emergency. Religion, is, indeed, the plaything of their fancy; but the world is the serious arbiter of their lives.

My brethren, let us carefully examine, whether we, in any shape, belong to this class of hearers. Let us be mindful, that Christianity

did not come from heaven, to be the amusement of an idle hour ; to be the food of mere imagination : to be, "as a very lovely song, of one that hath a pleasant voice, and playeth well upon an instrument." No : it is intended to be the guide, the guardian, the companion, of all our hours ; it is intended, to be the food of our immortal spirits ; it is intended, to be the serious occupation of our whole existence. Religion should enter into every thing that we think, or feel, or speak, or do. (2) Each morning, we should reflect, that we are about to enter on a day, which is the gift of God ; and which is wholly due to God ; and of which, we must hereafter render account, at the judgment-seat of God : and, having thus reflected, we should frequently, in the course of each day, recal these thoughts ; and apply to God, for his all-powerful grace, that we may continually feel ourselves in his most holy presence, and conduct ourselves as exposed to his all-seeing eye. And each night we should examine ourselves, wherein we have offended, wherein we have omitted any duty, or committed any fault ; we should humble ourselves for every such neglect, or offence, before the throne of grace ; and we should entreat for strength, and power from on high, to amend our lives, and to proceed in all virtue,

and Godliness of conversation. And, conscious, that, though placed in God's empire, we are surrounded by hosts of darkness, we should never lie down to rest without fortifying our souls, by devout, and fervent prayer. The Devil will flee from him, who is shielded by this divine armour: if such a man be sleepless, he will have recourse to the best, and only sure fountain of consolation, and enjoyment: like David, like Silas, like Saint Paul, and like our blessed Lord himself, his prayers and praises will ascend at midnight unto God; and, amidst his quiet, and refreshing slumbers, that God, will shield him from all evil, and "make his very dreams devout¹."

III. But we have yet a more impressive warning, to be derived from the seed, which fell among thorns.

Here, there is no fault to be found, with the quality of the soil. It is not hard and impenetrable, like the way side; it is not light and shallow, like the rocky ground; its natural fertility is proved, by the natural growth of weeds and thorns. But, though the good seed may, here, take root downward, and throw stems upward, and flourish for a season, and bear fruit after

¹ Bishop Ken. Midnight Hymn.

its kind,—the briars, weeds, and thorns, are suffered to encroach upon its produce; and the grain is poor, and imperfect, and never thoroughly ripe.

The application is but too plain. There are many, who have thought upon religion; who have felt some serious interest in it; who have sought to guide their conversation, according to the precepts of the Gospel. The misfortune is, that they have not given their whole hearts to God; and, with less than the whole heart, God cannot be acceptably served. Their spiritual growth is stopped, their harvest kept from ripening, by those thoughts, anxieties, and appetites, which they suffer to increase upon them. The cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desire of other things, choke the word; and they become unfruitful, and bring no fruit to perfection.

This is a melancholy picture; the more melancholy, because it is a picture from real life. For, in this world, there are multitudes, who thus think themselves religious, and deceive their own souls. They worship God, indeed; but they worship Mammon also. They profess to seek the kingdom of God; but they are desirous, also, to gain the world. They admit, that the pleasures of religion, are the best and highest plea-

asures; but they never scruple, to indulge in all the pleasures of the passing age. But let them not deceive themselves. He who gives but half a heart to God, will soon give the whole to the world. God himself, will reject such a gift. He is a jealous God: himself declares it; and the course of his providence is a commentary on his declaration. The ways, indeed, of providence, are not, in this mortal life, thoroughly disclosed; but whatever may be doubtful, thus much is certain, and it demands our most serious attention,—that many, who began life well; many, who, in the season of youth and manhood, gave promise of a virtuous, and good old age, have lived, but to devote that old age, to the dregs of an exhausted world. And why? Because, they never gave themselves fully to God; because, they suffered worldly cares, to usurp the place of religious watchfulness; because, they allowed the deceitfulness of riches, to wean their hearts from those treasures, which endure for ever; which neither moth nor rust can corrupt; and which thieves cannot break through, and steal. Riches once amassed, and trusted in; riches, whether amassed or not, once made the object of anxiety,—all Christian seriousness must perish. The love of money will increase, or a superannuated love of

pleasure will supplant it; and he who feared God in his youth, will thus fail to serve God in his age: and that offended God will, at length, reluctantly withdraw the lingering spirit of his grace.

My brethren, let it be our wish and prayer, that no such thorns may choke the seeds of religion in our hearts: and, in order that our prayers may be successful, let us determine, through God's grace, to give our whole hearts, to him who is their rightful owner. Let us not, like Ananias and Sapphira, keep back any part of our treasure; and the whole will be repaid us, an hundred and a thousand-fold.

IV. This is that good part, so beautifully described, in the fourth division of the parable.

"But other fell into good ground; and brought forth fruit, some an hundred-fold, some sixty-fold, some thirty-fold." Here, all the circumstances are favourable; all contribute, to the growth of an abundant produce. The seed, is from God himself; the giver of every good and perfect gift: the soil, is unexceptionable in its quality; not beaten, and trodden into hardness; not covered with rocks, not pre-occupied by thorns: and what is the consequence? The dew of the heavenly blessing descends upon it; the sunbeams of the Almighty prosper

it; the husbandman fills his granary with the best wheat; and there is joy before the Lord of the harvest.

The explanation of this division I shall give in the words of our gracious Master:—That on the good ground, are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it; and bring forth fruit, with patience. Such are those pious, wise, and humble Christians who like Mary, choose the good part, which shall not be taken away from them. They are those who, after their Redeemer's death and resurrection, hear the gracious words, which proceed out of the mouth of God, whether opening to his chosen vessels in their private reading, or public hearing of the Scriptures, treasure up what they hear, and are like to that seed, by which they are to grow to their food, by which they are to live to his praise, by which they are to express their love, and dispositions by which they are to comfort themselves from evil, to encourage themselves in good, to keep their names from being numbered among the wicked throughout, and their names to be glorified any regeneration which shall come. I have therefore said, that they are those who, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience. And I have said, that they are those who, like Mary, choose the good part, which shall not be taken away from them. And I have said, that they are those who, after their Redeemer's death and resurrection, hear the gracious words, which proceed out of the mouth of God, whether opening to his chosen vessels in their private reading, or public hearing of the Scriptures, treasure up what they hear, and are like to that seed, by which they are to grow to their food, by which they are to live to his praise, by which they are to express their love, and dispositions by which they are to comfort themselves from evil, to encourage themselves in good, to keep their names from being numbered among the wicked throughout, and their names to be glorified any regeneration which shall come.

it, with interest? This day I have been entrusted with a talent: and shall I lavish it in folly, or hide it in parsimony? No; I will, with God's grace, endeavour to trade upon it, so as to gain, if it were possible, another, and another talent; that so, at the end, I may be blessed with the invitation, given to each good and faithful servant of our Lord.'

Such is a profitable hearer of the word: his heart is honest; his intention is upright; and the blessing of his God, will prosper him, in all his ways. Such a man will not keep the word inactive in his memory: it will live, in his prayers; it will flourish, in his actions; it will shine forth, in his whole conduct and conversation; and men, seeing his good works, will glorify our Father, which is in heaven. He will bring forth fruit with patience. If his prayers should not seem to be immediately answered, he will persevere and faint not: God's time, will be his time (3); and tribulation will become to him a blessing; and persecution, a triumph; and temptation, itself, through the grace of God, a strengthener of his holiness, and virtue. Not cold and insensible, like the first class of hearers; not shallow and unstable, like the second; not selfish and worldly-minded, like the third,—his affections will be warm, his convictions deep, his devotedness en-

tire. All that he learns in the church, he will produce in his family; not merely, in words, but in deeds; his fruit will abound; not only in his own good conduct, and conversation, but in the conduct and conversation, of those who are drawn to imitate his good example. In this world, he will be happy; for holiness is happiness: in the world to come, he will be supremely happy; for, having followed Christ on earth, he will be made like him in heaven; and, having brought forth fruit in his season, he will be planted for ever, in the paradise of God.

And now, my brethren, I intreat you, make to your own hearts, the application of what has been said; or rather, pray that God will make it for you. It is plain, and simple; but serious, also, and important; for it is bottomed, on the everlasting word of God; that word, by which we must stand or fall; that word, by which we must all, hereafter, be tried; that word, by which it will be pronounced, whether I have spoken, as a faithful minister; and whether you have listened, as attentive hearers. May God, of his infinite mercy, grant, that, in that day, we shall meet each other, with joy, at his judgment-seat: and bear a good mutual testimony; and be invited, each in our several ranks, and degrees, to "enter into the joy of our Lord." And, in

order to this blessed consummation, may we ever be mindful, that the present time, is the only time, of working out our own salvation, with fear, and trembling ; with stedfastness, and perseverance ; with hope, that maketh not ashamed ; and with charity, that never faileth.

NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

(1) Page 5.] In the summer of 1809, in passing through the hamlet of Four Crosses, in Staffordshire, the writer was much struck by an old inscription, he now forgets whether cut in wood or stone, over the window of a very small, and ancient inn. It was transcribed on the spot; and it seems worthy of preservation :

Fleres, si scires unum tua tempora mensem :

Rides, cum non sit, forsitan, una dies.

(2) Page 8.] Extract from a letter of Archbishop Secker, to Dr. Hildesley, Bishop of Sodor and Mann : given in Weeden Butler's Life of Bishop Hildesley.

' Piety, in its true sense, is the first and great commandment. Many think external observances in religion to be piety; and, too many, to consist in the exercise of reverential affections towards God, though it prompt them very little, if at all, to imitate his moral attributes, and obey his injunctions to their fellow-creatures, and to the government of their own minds on ordinary occurrences. Perhaps they are induced, by this regard for God, not only to abstain from gross vices, usually so called, but to do acts of charity also, and contribute to religious uses; and so far is well; but, by no means do they, sufficiently, consider their obligations, as extending to every thing, in every part of life, and in their own breasts, in which there is a right and a wrong. And, hence, they conceive themselves at liberty, in point of conscience, to act as they will, in multitudes of instances, where they act very much otherwise than they ought.

‘ Therefore, I wanted your lordship to add a fourth conference, to the three you have already written ; for the purpose of saying, more explicitly, and dwelling more upon it, that religion extends its authority to *every thing* ; to the most worldly, the commonest, the lowest things ; and binds us, to behave reasonably, decently, humbly, honourably, meekly, and kindly in them all ; and that its interfering so far, instead of being a hardship, is a great blessing to us ; because it interferes always for our good.’

(3) Page 14.] ‘ I wait, O God, for that everlasting rest, which I want at present, but shall not want long. I 'am ready when thou, my God, callest for me : yet, can stay with patience, till thou pleasest. For thy time is the best time ; and thy pleasure, the best pleasure.’ — John Kettlewell's Dying Prayer, Works, vol. i. p. 29.

DISCOURSE II. *

MALACHI i. 11.

FOR, FROM THE RISING OF THE SUN, EVEN UNTO THE GOING DOWN OF THE SAME, MY NAME SHALL BE GREAT AMONG THE GENTILES; AND, IN EVERY PLACE, INCENSE SHALL BE OFFERED UNTO MY NAME, AND A PURE OFFERING; FOR MY NAME SHALL BE GREAT AMONG THE HEATHEN, SAITH THE LORD OF HOSTS.

THE words which I have just read, can be deemed no unsuitable introduction to a short series of discourses, on the Liturgy of our established Church. They convey a prophetic declaration, which, in the earliest ages of Christianity, was universally explained to relate to the regulated ordinances of Christian worship: and, we accordingly find them introduced, almost without variation, into the venerable liturgy of

* This, and the four succeeding discourses, were preached in the Cathedral Church of Cashel, in the year 1807.

the Alexandrine Church: 'We offer, with thankfulness,' said these primitive worshippers, 'this reasonable, and unbloody service; which all nations present unto thee, O Lord, from the rising up of the sun, unto the going down of the same; for thy name is great in all the nations; and, in every place, incense is offered unto thy name, and sacrifice, and oblation.' (1)

And, surely, it is delightful to reflect, that the Almighty Father of our spirits receives, with benign complacency, the prayers, and adoration, and thanksgiving, which, even now, ascend before his throne; and that He is preparing all things for the completion of that glorious period, when the great body of his matured and universal Church shall worship Him, with such unanimity, and elevation of soul, that "their prayer, shall be set forth before Him as incense; and the lifting up of their hands, as the evening sacrifice."

How this blessed consummation is to be finally effected, — by what process of divine wisdom and goodness, civil society is to be so modelled, and the hearts of individuals so changed, that the kingdoms of this world, shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, — it is not for the feebleness of human intellect to conjecture. But, of this we may rest assured, that,

since true piety, like its great author and object, is essentially the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever, and since a blessed unity of spirit animates all ministrations instituted by God, the purity and perfection of Christian worship, are, consequently, to be arrived at by adhering to the most primitive models; and we are, therefore, instead of seeking novelties, to "stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein."

This practice has received the sanction of authorities, which, it would be more than presumptuous, to impeach, or controvert. We are assured, by authors of unquestionable credit, that the earliest Christian Churches borrowed much of their liturgical service, from Jewish rituals; it is no less evident, than it is remarkable, that the prayers and hymns of the New Testament, are, almost uniformly, framed from similar passages in the Old; and we have reason to believe that our blessed Lord Himself, who had not the spirit by measure, in whom were hidden, all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, who spake, as never man spake, — that, even He condescended to derive his matchless prayer, from formularies in common use among the Jews; thus sanctioning, by his divine approbation, the simple, venerable, and elevated devotion, which,

even in a most corrupt age, and amidst a multitude of frivolous, and profane traditions, was, happily, preserved among God's ancient people.

Nor let us wonder, at the respect thus paid, to the public services of the Jews. Our blessed Lord, and his earliest followers, were too wise, and too benevolent, not to accommodate themselves to those attachments, which their countrymen felt, towards the long-established language, in which they had been accustomed to address their God. And, that the amplest provision was made amongst them, for the continuance of a service, at once rational and spiritual, affectionate and reverential, cannot be questioned by any, that have judgment to appreciate, and hearts to feel, the wisdom and piety of the single book of *PSALMS*. (2) Time, it is true, has not spared the services of the ancient Jewish Church; but we cannot reasonably doubt, concerning the multitudes, who, before our Saviour's advent, waited for the consolation of Israel, that their fervency was kindled, at the altar of the sanctuary, and that the best expressions of their devotion, were derived, from their predecessor David; of whom it has been said, by a noble Jewish writer, that, "In all his works he praised the Holy One, most High, with words of glory; with his whole heart, he sung songs; and loved Him, that made him."

Well, therefore, might an eloquent and pious Father, in reference to ancient, as well as to more recent times, to the Jewish, no less than to the Christian Church, pay this just and appropriate tribute, to the value of those devotional compositions whose spirit will never be extinct, while there is a God to be adored, and while there are any reasonable creatures, to pay a reasonable service: 'We should bless and revere the memory of God's servants,' says the venerable Chrysostom, 'both, because they rested their hope of salvation on the efficacy of prayer; and because, by the preservation of those hymns and services, which, while they rejoiced before God with trembling, were their peculiar treasure, they attract us to the imitation of their holy zeal: for, surely, the virtues of the teacher, should revive in the disciple; the hearers of the prophets, should emulate the prophets' holiness; we should live in the continual exercise, of prayer, and praise, and meditation, esteeming it our life, our health, our treasure, our supreme enjoyment, to pray to God, with pure and undefiled hearts.' (3)

And, assuredly, my Brethren, we, of this nation, and this establishment, have peculiar reason to imitate the pious thankfulness of this venerable writer. We, too, should bless and

revere the memory of God's servants, for the treasures of devotion, which they have bequeathed us; for that Liturgy, in particular, which was not compiled, and preserved, without the special inspiration of God's Spirit, and the, almost, unexampled care of his providence; a production, of which it may be truly said, that it is a combination, of whatever is sound in faith, whatever is elevated in devotion, whatever is productive of pure, benevolent, and holy practice. That a composition so nearly faultless in point of style, should have appeared, at so rude a period of our language, as the era of the reformation, is, in itself, a sort of literary miracle: and, even in this particular, we cannot avoid observing, a special, and most gracious provision, for the improvement of succeeding generations. For this form of sound words, whilst it can never become antiquated, so long as the English language retains its strength and purity, will always excite an emotion of mingled awe and admiration, by the venerable simplicity of former times. But it is on far higher grounds, that we are to rejoice in our Liturgical service; it is the union of reason, with spirituality; of seriousness, with cheerfulness; of the most profound humility, with the noblest elevation; it is the ever varying, yet ever consistent appeals,

to the imagination, the taste, the understanding, the affections, and the conscience ; it is, above all, or, rather the source, and soul of all the rest, that easy, artless, and unfettered exhibition of divine truth, not as it is mutilated or perverted, in any system of human manufacture, but as it is diffused over the rich expanse of Scripture, with a noble negligence of rule, such as, probably, appeared in the paradise of God, it is this, which distinguishes our Common Prayer, above all other formularies ; and which gives it a rank, second only to that sacred volume, from whence its spirit, if not its substance, is principally derived.

The peculiar excellences of our Church-of-England service, are to be traced, to a variety of causes, which cannot be investigated, or detailed, in a discourse like the present. One prominent cause, however, is too obvious, and too important, not to be adverted to ; namely, that our reformers most closely adhered to the models of primitive devotion. From the early ages of Christian antiquity, the two great divisions of the Church, eastern and western, preserved in their public services, all the grand truths, and all the practical piety, which had been transmitted, from the apostles and from their immediate successors. And, though,

in too many instances, superstition mingled itself with truth, and enthusiasm was blended with piety, matters were so providentially ordered, that whatever had the spirit of true and genuine Christianity, whatever agreed with the voice of reason and of Scripture, whatever raised the soul to God, was clearly separable from the spurious additions, of erroneous, and misguiding men. (4) This we know, with certainty; for, on inspecting the earliest liturgies extant, we at once perceive, that parts of them bear the unequivocal stamp of apostolic truth; whilst other passages, are, no less evidently, the spurious fabrication of later times. Of this, our English reformers, were well aware; in the Romish breviary and mass-book, and in the various formularies of the Greek church, they saw, and they condemned, much pernicious error; much, that was contrary to the light of reason; and much, that was in direct opposition to the truth of Scripture. But, they also had discernment to appreciate, and piety to love, that pure and spiritual religion, which the ignorance and vices of many centuries had been unable to efface. (5) They felt, that the established worship required reformation; but they did not think it reformation, indiscriminately to abolish and reject. They revered what was primitive;

and they wisely, and modestly, preferred a judicious selection from those services, which had endured the test of ages, to new compositions of their own. (6) When alteration was manifestly needful, they were not withheld from making it, by any superstitious attachment to words and phrases; and, to their honour be it spoken, they rarely altered, where they did not improve. How deeply we are indebted for what they retained, they only can judge, who have been led to examine for themselves; but some idea may be formed, when it is stated, that our Collects, Epistles, and Gospels, are copied, with comparatively few exceptions, and with some occasional alterations, from ancient Romish missals; and that all our services, morning and evening, sacramental and occasional, have derived some of their best thoughts, and, not unfrequently, entire prayers, from liturgies that were totally rejected, by the far greater proportion of the Continental reformers.

This peculiarity in our public service, could not have arisen, without a special preparation of circumstances. It, therefore, pleased the wisdom and goodness of God, to raise up two men, as the chief compilers of our Liturgy, who added, to a masterly knowledge of the sacred Scriptures, a most extended acquaintance with the

best and earliest writers of Christian antiquity. The sound judgment, the pure taste, the practical good sense, the deep and thorough insight into all the passions and emotions of the human heart, which were eminently possessed by Cranmer and Ridley, qualified them, perhaps beyond any others, either of the British or Continental reformers, to separate the pure gold of primitive devotion, from the drossy accompaniments, which clung to it, in the darkness of the middle ages; and, looking beyond the mere circumstances of the period in which they lived (whose exigencies, however, they by no means neglected), to adapt themselves to the grand features of human nature, whether in its degraded, or in its improved state; whether as corrupted by the fall, or as restored by the regenerating grace of God.

To approach, as near as possible, to the Church of the Apostles, and to that of the old Catholic Bishops and Fathers, so long as they deemed it pure and unadulterated, (7) was the paramount direction of their tastes, their judgments, and their hearts. And this they were able to effect, by a circumstance peculiar to their own country. At Geneva, in the Low Countries, and in Scotland, it is well known, that the Reformation of religion proceeded from the people; and, as it is

the acknowledged tendency of the multitude, to deem every innovation an improvement, it is not wonderful, that these popular reformers, entirely rejected the ancient models, and adopted forms of worship, most opposite to those which had been in use for ages. In England, the case was different. The Reformation there, proceeded from the throne; and our monarchs, by disposition, by habit, and by deeply rooted associations, were attached to what had the sanction of time, and the authority of long-established usage.

But the special interference of Divine Providence did not terminate, with the first establishment of our Liturgy. Almost from that very period, it was subjected to a series of formidable attacks, from parties who professed different opinions, and were actuated by the most jarring principles; but who united, in the single point of dissent from our public worship. Even within the Church itself, some were found, whose integrity cannot be impeached, who were on the point of introducing alterations, which could not have failed to prove equally injurious to the cause of truth and piety. But, during these dangers from within, and from without, the purity and integrity of our Liturgy, were most signally guarded, and the proposed inno-

vations of misjudging, and misguided men, were repeatedly baffled, sometimes, when they appeared on the very eve of completion, by means altogether beyond the ordinary standard of human computation. Whoever fairly examines the ecclesiastical history of England, with a view to the subject, will see the weaknesses, the prejudices, and the passions, of men, overruled for this beneficial purpose; he will see conferences, and convocations, and parliaments, all unconsciously moved by the secret springs of Providence; he will see the friends and foes of our establishment, alike contributing to perpetuate the existence of a service, whose merits neither of the contending parties was, probably, well qualified to appreciate; and, in all this, he will, manifestly, discern the wisdom and goodness of the Most High, providing for the spiritual progress and advancement of succeeding generations.

I have, thus long, dwelt on matters, chiefly, of a critical and historical nature; but, I trust, that, when enabled to resume the subject, considerations of a more practical and interesting character, will not fail to present themselves. It is certain, that Omnipotence does nothing in vain; it is no less certain, that, when, by various movements, Providence marks out to us a great

design, we shall be involved in deep criminality, if we do not employ our best powers, in the furtherance and promotion of that design. Now, such, precisely, is the case with respect to our Liturgy. In its formation, it has been, happily, and, doubtless, providentially, guarded, alike from excess, and from deficiency. It possesses a peculiar temperament, equally remote from all extremes, and harmoniously blending all excellences: it is not superstitious, it is not fanatical, it is not cold and formal, it is not rapturous and violent; but it unites, perhaps beyond any other human composition, sublime truth and pure spirit; the calmest wisdom, and the most energetic devotion. Under various trying circumstances, it has been so signally and repeatedly preserved, that we cannot doubt it is continued to us, for some greater purpose, than it has hitherto effected. While the very memory of many contending parties, that threatened its destruction, has nearly passed away, it remains uninjured, and unaltered; giving us to conjecture, that it is reserved for still nobler, more extended, and more enduring triumphs. And amongst these, there is one triumph, in which we are, every one of us, deeply interested: its triumph, namely, over all the evils of our own hearts, and all the serious unhappiness of our

own lives. From year to year, and from week to week, we have listened to, and joined in the use of, this form of sound words. Have you, my brethren, ever yet, deliberately, and affectionately, pondered on the deep spiritual meaning, of the prayers, and praises, and thanksgivings, in which you are thus accustomed to participate? Have you ever seriously endeavoured, to carry the spirit of our Liturgy into your common habits of life? Are you prepared to say, that you fully understand, or deeply feel, or cordially relish, or consistently act upon, the principles and feelings, which are inculcated in our public service? Can you satisfy your own hearts and consciences, that the pure, the holy, the heavenly spirit, which our Liturgy uniformly breathes, has even yet begun, to live in your affections, to rule in your families, to regulate your conduct, to make you holy and happy, at peace with your fellow-creatures, and in humble, but cheerful, communion with your God? These are the effects, which, assuredly, should follow, from a right participation of our established worship. If they have, yet, been imperfectly produced, let us not despair: we have a God to approach, who is our Father and our friend; who is life, and light, and love; who can raise his fallen creatures from the death

of sin ; who can enlighten the darkness of our understandings ; and who can graft in our hearts, the love of his own adorable perfections. He can make that clear, and affecting, and divinely efficacious, which, before, was comparatively obscure, uninteresting, and of little discernible effect. With the most unreserved dependence on his aid, then, I would entreat you to give your minds to the future consideration of our Liturgy ; and that, not as a matter of curiosity and speculation, but as a serious and solemn duty of religion, for which we are all accountable in the sight of God. The consequences may be of infinite importance, if we engage in this inquiry, with singleness, and simplicity, and docility of heart. We may then be enabled, to behold, in a new, and happy light, our duties and our blessings ; all that we are called to realize, in this world, of holiness, purity, and peace ; all that we are destined to possess, in the world to come, of joy and glory. It is our bounden duty, then, and we should feel it our highest privilege, to pray with the spirit, and the understanding ; to worship God, in spirit, and in truth. In this course, it is, that, I earnestly wish, we may all be enabled to proceed. And, with this view, I shall endeavour, in a few succeeding discourses, to elucidate the meaning, and to enlarge upon the practical, and spiritual

instructions, of our Common Prayer. But, I must now conclude : with a truth, which I hope, may remain engraven on your hearts, and on my own ; that, except it please Almighty God, to enlighten our understandings, and purify our affections, the labour of the preacher, and the attention of the hearer, will both be spent in vain.

NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

(1) Page 20.] *Ευχαριστούντες προσφερομεν την λογικην και αναιμακτην λατρειαν ταυτην, ην προσφερει σοι, κυριε, παντα τα εθνη, απο ανατολων ηλιου και μεχρι δυσμων, απο αρκτου και μεσημβριας· οτι μεγα το ονομα σου εν πασι τοις εθνεσι, και, εν παντι τοπω, θυμιαμα προσφερεται τῷ ονοματι τῷ ἁγίῳ σου, και θυσια, και προσφορα.*—Liturg. D. Marci, ap. Fabric. tom. iii. p. 278.

(2) Page 22.] ‘Le langage de la dévotion, est le langage de la cœur; il est simple et touchant. Le respect qui est dû à la Majesté Divine, et l’édification du peuple, demandent cette simplicité; et l’écriture sainte nous apprend à prier de cette manière. Les prières et les louanges qu’on trouve dans les livres sacrés, et, en particulier, dans les pseumes, ne sont autre chose que des mouvemens du cœur, qui même ont le plus souvent peu de liaison; on remarque la même chose dans l’oraison Dominicale, qui est le grand modèle des prières des Chrétiens; une extrême simplicité, jointe à une grande brièveté.’—Préf. de la Liturg. de Neuchatel.

‘The book of Psalms was the Jewish liturgy.’ Joseph Mede, i. 3. See also, the Jerusalem Talmud, Cl. i. Tr. i. cap. 4.; and Lightf. i. p. 699.

(3) Page 23.] S. Chrysost. Tom. i. p. 745. Ed. Front. Duc.

(4) Page 26.] ‘En matière de culte, on doit avoir de

très-grands égards pour ce qui se pratiquoit dans les premiers siècles de l'Eglise, et il faut avouer, qu'on trouve dans les prières des anciens une simplicité, et une onction, toute particulière. Qui peut douter, d'ailleurs, que ce qui se faisoit dans ces tems-là, et qui avoit été établi par les successeurs des Apôtres, ne soit très-conforme à l'esprit de l'Evangile, et ne doive être regardé avec respect par tous les Chrétiens? Il est vrai que les coutumes des Eglises varièrent beaucoup dans la suite; on s'écarta de cette première simplicité, et l'on chargea les liturgies de bien des choses inutiles, et même contraires à la pureté du culte évangélique; c'est ce qu'on remarque dans celles qui sont parvenus jusqu'à nous. Mais il est certain, que le fond, et l'essence, de l'ancien culte, a été conservé dans presque toutes les liturgies; et que si en laissant-là ce que chaque liturgie a de particulier, et ce qui a été ajouté, à mesure que l'ignorance, l'erreur, et la superstition se répandoient dans l'Eglise, on retenoit ce qui a été d'un usage ancien et général, et en quoi toutes les liturgies s'accordent, à peu de choses près, on auroit la véritable forme du culte des premiers Chrétiens. Ce seroit aussi-là, l'un des meilleurs moyens de parvenir à cette uniformité, qui seroit si nécessaire, pour la paix et pour l'édification de l'Eglise.'—Préf. de la Liturg. de Neuchatel.

The plan here recommended, was pursued by the Church of England alone, among the reformed churches. 'Certum mihi est λειτουργίαν Anglicanam, satis congruere institutis vetustioris ecclesiæ; a quibus in Galliâ, et Belgio recessum, negare non possumus.'—Grot. Epist. ad Boet.

(5) Page 26.] 'To say, that in nothing they may be followed, which are of the Church of Rome, were violent and extreme. Some things they do, in that they are men; in that they are wise and Christian men, some things; some things, in that they are men misled, and blinded with error. As far as they follow reason and truth, we fear not to tread the self-same steps wherein they have gone, and to

be their followers. When Rome keepeth that which is ancienter and better, others, whom we much more affect, leaving it for newer, and changing it for worse, we had rather follow the perfections of them whom we like not, than in defects resemble them whom we love.'—Hooker, b. v. s. 28.

(6) Page 27.] 'In Angliâ vides quam bene processerit dogmatum noxiorum repurgatio; hæc maxime de causâ, quod qui id sanctissimum negotium procurandum suscepere, nihil admiserint *novi*, nihil *sui*; sed ad meliora secula intentam habuere oculorum aciem.'—Grotii Ep. ad Joan. Corvinum.

'Si me conjectura non fallit, totius Reformationis pars integerrima est in Angliâ; ubi, cum studio veritatis, viget studium antiquitatis: quam certi homines dum spernunt, in laqueos se induunt, unde, nisi mendacio, extere se nequeunt.'—Isaac Casaubon. Ep. Claud. Salmasio,

To these important testimonies, I have great pleasure in adding a noble passage, from a young divine, whom I am happy to call my friend:—

'Pure in its doctrine, apostolic in its discipline, and edifying in its ceremonies, — ceremonies which admitted of alteration, according to the circumstances of time and place, — we believe, that the Catholic and Apostolic Church diffused its blessings, and preserved its orthodoxy, for above four hundred years. In the dark ages of barbarism, which succeeded, we believe, that it existed still¹; existed, as the Church of God, adapted to the exigences of the time, — but overgrown with corruptions, and disfigured by superstition. In such a state, we believe, that it remained, polluted, but not extinct; when, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the sun of learning having dawned upon Europe, its defects,

¹ Ecclesia videtur, sicut luna, deficere, sed non deficit; obumbrari potest, deficere non potest. — Ambrose Hex. lib. iv. cap. 2.

which had been obscured under the cloud of darkness and ignorance, were brought to light, and betrayed themselves, too obviously, to be any longer tolerated. The Bishops and Governors of the Church of England, gradually became sensible of these corruptions; and acknowledged sincerely the defects, to which truth would permit them no longer to be blind. But to ascertain, and to supply a proper remedy, was, with them, a work of deliberation, of labour, and of time. The rashness and presumption of other reformers, both at home and abroad, in resolving, at once, to raze to the ground the venerable pile of their forefathers, and to build with the materials a new edifice of human invention, proved a warning to them, not afforded in vain. Venerating the fabric which had been reared by apostolic hands, they slowly and carefully removed the incrustations which disfigured it; and, clearing the foundations of the rubbish which had choked them up, brought to light the great key-stone of the corner, and displayed the real rock, upon which it was built. Thus, the primitive and apostolic church stood forth distinct and clear, from out the ruins in which it had been long imbedded, in all the dignified simplicity, and majestic plainness, which had obtained for it, in former times, the respect of the heathen, and the willing blood of martyrs.' — Sermon at the consecration of Bishop Luscomb, by the Rev. W. F. Hook, M.A. p. 19. Lond. 1825.

(7) Page 28.] 'Accessimus autem, quantum maxime potuimus, ad ecclesiam Apostolorum, et veterum Catholicorum Episcoporum, et Patrum, quam scimus adhuc fuisse integram, utque Tertullianus ait, incorruptam virginem, nullam idololatria, nec errore gravi ac publico contaminatam: nec tantum doctrinam nostram, sed etiam sacramenta, prae-cumque publicarum formam, ad illorum ritus et instituta direximus. Religionem turpiter neglectam et depravatam, ad originem, et ad primordia revocavimus. Inde enim putavimus instaurationem petendam esse, unde prima religionis

initia ducta essent. 'Hæc enim ratio,' inquit antiquissimus Pater, Tertullianus, 'valet adversus omnes hæreses, id esse verum, quodcunque primum; id esse adulterum, quodcunque posterius.' Irenæus sæpe ad antiquissimas ecclesias provocavit, quæ Christo fuissent viciniore, quasque credibile vix esset erravisse. Jam vero, cur ea hodie ratio non initur? Cur ad antiquarum ecclesiarum similitudinem non redimus? Cur id a nobis hodie audiri non potest, quod olim in Concilio Nicæno, a tot Episcopis, et Catholicis patribus, nullo refragante, pronuntiatum est, — *εθῆ ἀρχαία κρατεῖτω*; — Jewel. Apol. p. 155. Lond. 1692.

DISCOURSE III.

PSALM xxix. 2.

GIVE THE LORD THE HONOUR DUE UNTO HIS NAME;
WORSHIP THE LORD, WITH HOLY WORSHIP.

THESE words bring before us the two chief properties of public worship, the two grand requisites of genuine devotion; zeal for the glory of God, and desire for the sanctification of man. These things, God hath been pleased to join together. Throughout the Scriptures, his own glory, and the sanctification of his reasonable creatures, are used almost as convertible terms; and, as such too, they would seem to be commonly regarded, in the offices of our Church. In the following plain and familiar observations, therefore, it shall be my object to show, that, in our public Liturgy, we are taught and invited to 'give the Lord the honour due unto his name,' by adoring him, as he is revealed to reason and to faith, in

his works and in his word ; and to “ worship the Lord, with holy worship,” by making all the imitable qualities of the divine nature, at once, the source, and the model, of our own attainable proficiency.

The authors of our Liturgy, in their view of Him, who ruleth over us, and careth for us, have observed a happy, and scriptural moderation. They do not, as the manner of some is, compel us to shrink, under the gloomy apprehension, of a mysterious, arbitrary tyrant, clothed in terrors, and dwelling in blackness, darkness, and tempest : they do not, in the opposite extreme, permit us to sleep on, and take our rest, in the cold, abstract, philosophic veneration, of a first cause, first mover, and supreme intelligence. The service, which they teach and recommend, is, at once, reasonable, and affectionate. They make provision, for the removal of unquiet and uneasy feelings, by giving us worthy thoughts of our almighty Ruler. They lead us, to the meek and reverential love of our all-wise, all-powerful, all-perfect God ; our Father, no less than our Creator ; awful, indeed, in his holiness, but inexpressibly benignant, in his condescension.

This, then, is the spirit of our Liturgy : a spirit, which infuses hope, into the humblest confessions ; and which gives comfort, in the very

sighings of a contrite heart. This is the spirit, which testifies, that wilfully to offend God, is the only real misery; and consciously to please him, the only true source of peace and joy: that we can be wretched, only by defacing in ourselves his glorious image; and happy, only by the participation of his nature; rendering us, in the true scriptural sense of the words, and according to the measure of our bounden capacities, pure as he is pure, merciful as he is merciful, perfect as he is perfect.

It is, accordingly, a distinctive feature of our Common Prayer, that, while it never loses sight of the perfect purity and holiness of God, and never lowers the standard of practical Christianity, it always remembers, that we serve a God of mercy and compassion, of long suffering and of great goodness; a God, who waiteth his opportunity to be gracious; who doth not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax; who despiseth not the beginnings of good, however small; and whose wise, and gracious benignity, hath provided milk for babes, no less carefully than strong meat for those of full age.

We are to observe, then, that our Church opens her maternal arms, to all, however weak, and even however criminal, who have but a sincere desire to turn from their wickedness and

live. With her, a consciousness of weakness, and a desire of strength, a feeling of misery, and a wish for relief, a sense of bondage, and a thirst after deliverance, are a sufficient title to approach the Majesty of Heaven. "Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,"—were the words of our merciful Redeemer, and such, too, are the language, and the spirit, of our Liturgy. In numberless instances, it holds out encouragement to the weakest order of Christians; many passages are adapted to the case of a returning, and repentant sinner; many, are calculated, at once, to inspire true feelings of penitent devotion, to heal the wounded spirit of the contrite, and to instil humble confidence, into those, who are apprehensive of God's righteous judgments. But, even in the most penitential parts of our service; even in the midst of accommodation to the wants of persons entering on a course of amendment, there is a prospect opened, of mature, established, and victorious Christianity. It is declared, as the infallible result of God's 'faithfulness and justice,' that he is ready, not only, to 'forgive us our sins,' but also, to 'cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' Our 'Almighty, and most merciful Father,' is intreated, not only, to remit the punishment, but to abolish the power of sin.

And, 'the absolution and remission of our sins' itself, is made to consist, not merely in the reversal of a sentence, and removal of a curse, but in the influence of the Holy Spirit, consequent on true repentance, and productive, not of mere temporary and outward amendment, but of that inward abiding 'purity and holiness, for the rest of our life,' which, 'at the last,' will bring us to 'God's eternal joy.'

It is the language of our Church, then, as it is the voice of Christ's religion, that we should 'lift up our hearts;' that we should not be content, with the first movements, however sincere, of penitent devotion, but should seek to rise, from penitence, to faith, and hope, and love; that we should, unceasingly, press forward to higher attainments; and deem it little, to avoid all outward evil, unless, through God's grace, we be 'cleansed in the thoughts of our hearts;' that we should not be satisfied with ourselves, while one irregular desire is indulged, one corrupt affection unmortified, one unholy or uncharitable temper unsubdued; in a word, that we should, unreservedly, give ourselves to God, to be formed and guided as he lists; whose delight it is, to 'nourish us with all goodness,' and to lead us in 'the way of peace.'

The practical doctrine of our Liturgy, then, is

a doctrine of righteousness and holiness : and, availing myself of the very language of our Common Prayer, I will endeavour to express it, in a few words. It seems to me to be simply this : 'That every son and daughter of Adam is conceived and born in sin ; that the whole human race naturally lies in darkness and the shadow of death ; agitated by unruly wills and affections, liable to various dangers and necessities, subject to divers diseases, and sundry kinds of death : that it pleased the blessed Son of God, to take our nature upon him ; to suffer death upon the cross, for our redemption ; to offer, by his meritorious death and passion, a full, perfect, and sufficient, sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world ; thus, obtaining power, to destroy the works of the Devil, to make us the sons of God, and heirs of everlasting life ; purchasing, by his precious blood, a universal Church ; a Church, built upon the foundation of the Prophets and Apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the head corner-stone ; a Church, whose faithful members, when the number of God's elect is accomplished, and the period of his kingdom is arrived, shall have their perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in his eternal and everlasting kingdom.'

These are exceeding great and precious bene-

fits; but we are not authorized by Scripture, nor taught by our Liturgy, nor sanctioned by common sense, to rejoice in those benefits, any further, than as we are qualified for their participation,—I use the words of our seventeenth article,—‘by the working of the spirit of Christ, mortifying the works of the flesh, and our earthly members, and drawing up our affections to high and heavenly things.’ For, to us it will be a miserable consolation, nay, we are assured, it will prove a heightening of our punishment, that “light is come into the world, if we love darkness rather than the light, because our deeds are evil.” But are there any souls, afflicted by the consciousness of past transgressions, and truly desirous of amendment, of pardon, and of peace? Our Church not only invites you to the throne of grace, but indicates, in almost every portion of her service, the progressive stages, by which you are to advance in the Christian life. She tells you, to approach, with ‘an humble, lowly, penitent, and obedient heart,’ conscious of your own misery and demerit, and persuaded, that you ‘cannot do any thing that is good, without God.’ She encourages you, to implore that your ‘most loving Father would renew in you, whatever has been decayed, by the fraud or malice of the Devil, or by your

own carnal will and frailness;' to seek, by fervent prayer, for 'a new spirit:' the spirit, to 'think and do, always, such things as be right-ful; the spirit, of wisdom, and understanding; of counsel, and ghostly strength, of knowledge, and true godliness; the spirit, in whose holy comfort you may evermore rejoice.' She instructs you in the real nature of your Christianity; in that, which alone can entitle you to the Christian name; which is, 'to follow the example of our Saviour Christ, and to be made like unto him.' She, accordingly, so applies, and so brings home to our necessities, every instructive, and influencing event, of his most blessed course, as to afford a brief, but clear exhibition, of all true religion; of that religion, which we are called to realize in our hearts, and to exemplify in our lives.

This practical exhibition, and application, of the circumstances of the life of our blessed Lord, have, with singular propriety, been effected, in that series of devotional compositions, which, in accordance with the most primitive models, our Church has adapted to the great commemorative festivals, and solemn days of worship; in those collects, I mean, which are prefixed to the Epistles and Gospels, in our Book of Common Prayer.

We are there taught to pray, 'that, as Christ took our nature upon him, and was born of a pure virgin, so we, being regenerate, and made God's children, by adoption and grace, may be daily renewed, by the same spirit: that, as Christ was circumcised and obedient to the law, so we, receiving the true circumcision of the Spirit, may, in all things, obey his blessed will: that, as Christ was manifested, to destroy the works of the Devil, so we may purify ourselves even as he is pure: that, as Christ was presented in the temple, so we may be presented unto God, with pure and clean hearts: that, as Christ suffered death upon the cross, so we, may follow the example of his great humility, and patience: that, by continually mortifying our evil and corrupt affections, we may be buried with Christ, and pass, through the grave and gate of death, to our joyful resurrection: that, as our Lord Jesus Christ ascended into the heavens, so we may, also, in heart and mind thither ascend, and with him continually dwell: and, finally, that, as he hath been exalted, with great triumph, into his heavenly kingdom, we may not be left comfortless; but that God, the King of Glory, may send his Holy Ghost, to comfort us, and exalt us unto the same place, whither our Saviour Christ is gone before.'

But, it is needless to multiply references. For it may be truly said, that our Liturgy uniformly dwells upon that which is inward, and practical. It aims, not merely to reform outward habits, but to infuse new, and powerful principles into the soul; not chiefly to exercise our understandings, but, to affect and influence our hearts; not, so much, to afford comfort, by a view of what has been done for us, as to make us humble, earnest, and successful petitioners, for the effect of Christianity within us; animating, at once, and controlling our thoughts, dispositions, affections, and habitual practice.

The great mediatorial truths of the Gospel are exhibited, as the foundation of our hopes, and the commencement of all spiritual good. But, while our Saviour is contemplated, as living, and suffering, and dying, upon earth, that, through Him, we might obtain remission of our sins, and all other benefits of his passion, — He is, every where, acknowledged as the triumphant Lord of Glory; as head, over all things, to the Church; as God, over all, blessed for ever. He is, therefore, continually addressed, as a present, powerful Saviour; who is occupied in the great work of our redemption, as really, and as efficaciously, at this moment, as during his manifestation in the flesh. And, while we implore

every blessing through Him, as a prevalent, and infinitely meritorious intercessor with the Father, we are taught, no less piously, and confidently, to address Him, as the great administrator of this lower world; regarding Him, as our King, who is to rule over our life, to reign in our hearts, to guide us with his counsel, and, at the last, to receive us into glory. In a word, Christ is so dwelt upon, that, if we enter into the true spirit of our Liturgy, our faith cannot possibly be notional, and barren: but, according to our several capacities, in a greater or less degree, the very mind and heart of our Redeemer, must be copied into our character; and we shall be followers of Him, who often retired apart to pray, and who always went about doing good.

Were I, therefore, obliged, in a few words, to characterize the design of our Liturgy, I would state it thus, in the emphatic words of holy writ: "That Christ may be formed within us; that we may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death; that Christ may dwell in our hearts, by faith; that we, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend, with all saints, what is the length, and breadth, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth

knowledge, that we might be filled with all the fulness of God."

Such is our invaluable Liturgy. And, while precluded from, at present, enlarging on the subject, I am hopeful that its importance will engage your attention, in your retired hours.

It remains, that I say a few words, on a matter closely connected with all that I have said before. We have been treating of a public service; and, I am confident, you will bear with that sense of duty, which demands from me a short and plain inquiry, respecting the feelings, with which, we should approach the house of God; with which, we should join in public worship; and, that worship closed, with which, we should return to the bosom of our families.

We, of the communion of the Church of England, enjoy no common privileges; and God Almighty expects no common return. There is not a time, that we assemble, in this the house of prayer, without having, as it were, a fresh entry made against us, in the books of Heaven. For, does not our whole Liturgy, do not many single Collects of it, teach us, most distinctly, and impressively, the nature of that religion, to which God calls us, and to which we, by our example, ought to call the world. With what circumspection, then, with what awe, with what

holy recollection, with what earnest desire of spiritual improvement, should we enter into the house of God? This, if we may so speak, is a school of divine appointment, weekly opened for our instruction. And, assuredly, we shall both neglect our bounden duty, and turn aside from the source of true wisdom, and true happiness, if we do not strive to keep our minds intent, upon the sacred purposes for which we are here assembled; or if we do not restrain our imagination from wandering, our thoughts from fixing on unsuitable objects, our hearts from being occupied, with the low cares, and petty interests, of this perishable world. Let me, then, intreat you to examine, how have you been employed, during the service of this day? Have you been present in body only, or in soul and in spirit? Have you prayed with your lips, merely, or with your heart? Have you heard God's word, with your outward ears only, or has it sunk into your understanding, and penetrated your affections? What good desire has been excited, what abiding principle of piety has been acquired, what useful or important truth have you treasured up, since you entered this place, dedicated to God's worship, and sanctified by his peculiar presence? Believe me, it will little avail us at the day of judgment, it will, on the

contrary, prove an aggravation to our offence, that we have the best, the most rational, the most pious form of prayer in the world, if we shall not be found to have imbibed the spirit, and, in our practice, illustrated the excellency, of that service, If, as in many other reformed Churches, our devotions were left at the discretion of the officiating minister, and were thus liable to fall, as he may fall, into coldness of affection, perhaps into wrongness of faith, then, indeed, our responsibility would be less awful, because our advantages, and opportunities of improvement, would be far less certain. But, as it is, we have no excuse; none, that can satisfy our own conscience; much less, that can be pleaded, before the holy and heart-searching God. In the service of our church, we are not only taught our duty, we are invited and drawn to the love and practice of it; we are provided, with the happiest expressions of deep, yet cheerful piety; of simple, yet sublime devotion. All, evidently, comes from the heart of the composers; and all, undoubtedly, should come home to the business and bosoms of us, my brethren. Let me, then, be permitted to recommend, that you should set apart a portion of this, and of your future Sabbaths, to serious and private recollection. Let your prayer-books be the com-

panions of your retirement: reflect upon the truths which they teach, the duties which they inculcate, the blessed hopes which they afford you, for the future, the divine aids and consolations, which they furnish for the present, — and then, ask your own hearts, whether there can be a more reasonable, a more profitable, or a more truly Christian determination, than, through God's most gracious favour, and by the continual help of his blessed Spirit, to make our Liturgy, in subordination only to the sacred word of God, the rule of your faith, the standard of your holiness, and the measure of your proficiency, in every Christian grace and virtue.

And now, my brethren, I will conclude, with this earnest wish and prayer: that the God of peace may give us meek hearts, quiet spirits, and devout affections; that, whether in public, or in private, in the sanctuary, or in our closets, we may be so united in our prayers and praises here, that we may eternally join in adoration and thanksgiving hereafter.

DISCOURSE IV.

PSALM XXIX. 2.

GIVE THE LORD THE HONOUR DUE UNTO HIS NAME; WORSHIP
THE LORD, WITH HOLY WORSHIP.

I TRUST you are disposed to agree with me, that, while our Liturgy uniformly “gives the Lord the honour due unto his name,” it may no less justly be pronounced, that, so far as we enter into its genuine spirit, we “worship the Lord with holy worship.” For every view which it gives of God, every reference which it makes to the leading principles of our nature, every prospect which it opens, every aspiration which it breathes, unite in teaching us, that we are formed for holiness; and that, without making us holy, not even Omnipotence can make us happy.

But it is very far from my wish, that these characters of our Liturgy should rest on mere

general assertion. They deserve, and they demand, close investigation. They call upon you to examine, and to judge for yourselves. In the limited observations, therefore, which I am about to make, it is my chief purpose to call your attention to the subject, that you may be induced to search, like the noble Bereans, "whether these things be so." And, it is the sober conviction of my judgment, that your labour will be amply repaid; that, if you examine with a right spirit, you will find in our common prayer, a depth and fulness, exceeded only in the sacred volume: that you will discover in it, the most luminous order, accompanied with ease and freedom; the profoundest meaning, clothed in the most unlaboured simplicity of expression, and addressed, at once, to the imagination, and the heart.

It shall be my humble effort, then, to clear the avenues to the sanctuary. May you be led, by the good Spirit of God, to explore its inmost recesses; to acquaint yourselves with its just proportions; to derive light and heat, from the pure fire of its altar; so that, like the Psalmist, you may supremely desire "to dwell in the house of the Lord, all the days of your life; to behold the fair beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple."

It is certain, that we enter, each morning, on a new period, not only of existence, but of danger and of duty: in which, we have temptations to resist, trials to encounter, difficulties to surmount, and a variety of social, civil, and religious obligations, to discharge. With what happy fitness, then, is it ordered, that our morning service should be a special preparation for active holiness; for safety, during our intercourse with a dangerous world; for such calm, collected self-possession, even in the busiest scenes of life, that we may "attend upon the Lord," as the apostle expresses it, "without distraction." To establish this fact by extended investigation, would far exceed my limits: let us, then, narrow the field, by briefly adverting to the last morning-Collect.

The introduction is full of encouragement: the God whom we address, is our 'Lord,' and, therefore, we belong to him; he is 'our heavenly Father,' and, therefore, tenderly loves us; he is 'Almighty,' and, therefore, can abundantly protect us; He is 'everlasting,' and, therefore, may be entrusted with the hidden issues of eternity. By the remembrance of his most recent mercies, we are emboldened to seek for present support, and confirmation; assured, that the same 'mighty power,' which has 'safely

brought us to the morning light,' is able to defend us, 'in all noon-day perils;'—that, if we truly "commit our way unto the Lord," He will keep us, each day, from carelessly 'falling into sin,' or presumptuously 'running into danger,' of it; and, finally, that, if we maintain in our hearts the spirit of this prayer, 'all our doings will then be ordered by God's governance, to do always that is righteous in his sight;' in conformity to the scriptural assurance, that "the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord; and He delighteth in his way."

This Collect is, doubtless, full of comfort: but it holds out no comfort to cold and careless worshippers; it requires, that we should reflect, each morning, how much we have to encounter, and how much to fulfil, in the approaching day; it calls us to vigilance, self-possession, self-command, and self-denial; it should excite in us, a tender sensibility of conscience, ready to take alarm at the first approach of evil; an habitual aptitude to pray, that He, who alone can sustain and strengthen us, would preserve us "blameless and harmless; the sons of God, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation;" it should remind us, that, as we have great dangers to avoid, so we have great duties to fulfil; that we are bound, in our studies and conversation, in

our professions and pursuits, in our intercourse with the world, and in the secret retirement of our hearts, as members of society, and as members of the Church, to live supremely to our God. Always remembering, that our sufficiency is of Him alone; and, that, without his 'most gracious and ready help,' the best-concerted schemes, and the most laborious exertions, must terminate in fruitless and melancholy disappointment.

The dangers and duties, briefly epitomized in this Collect, are fully expanded, in the service which immediately follows; our truly spiritual Litany; in its substance, probably, the most ancient, and, certainly, in its range, the most comprehensive branch, of our public worship.

The method is at once perspicuous and unlaboured; after solemnly invoking each person of the blessed Trinity, we deprecate sin itself; its causes, and consequences; its several kinds and degrees, inward and outward, spiritual and carnal; we deprecate the judgments which it provokes, and the dangers which it causes, both to the stability of our government, and the purity of our worship; and, above all, we deprecate that hardness of heart, and that contempt of God's word and commandment, which, alone, can seal us up in final impenitence, and ever-

lasting ruin. This branch of our Litany then concludes, with a most energetic, and affecting enumeration, of all the means which our merciful Redeemer employed for our deliverance; his humiliation, his trials, and his sufferings; his 'precious death and burial;' his 'glorious resurrection and ascension,' and 'the coming of the Holy Ghost;' events, which are still pregnant with the most healing and enlivening influences; which, if they are, seriously, and affectionately, brought home to our hearts, and resorted to as a source of practical strength,—will not fail to afford us strength and consolation, even in the most alarming conjunctures: 'in all time of our tribulation, in all time of our wealth, in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment.'

And, here, suffer me to observe, that sin is first deprecated, and most fully enlarged upon, as its own central punishment; as far more grievous and intolerable, than 'lightning and tempest,' than 'plague, pestilence and famine,' than 'battle, and murder, and sudden death;' calamities, which, however terrible in themselves, derive their chief sting, and torment, from a guilty conscience. It also deserves serious consideration, that, in enumerating the most critical periods of our being, the 'time of our wealth' is represented as more alarming than 'the time

of our tribulation,' and as inferior in awfulness, only, to 'the hour of death, and to the day of judgment.' A most awakening comment, on our Lord's declaration; that "it is a hard thing, for a rich man, to enter into the kingdom of Heaven."

The intercessions that follow, are distinguished by a rare union, of comprehensiveness and detail. They give the most enlarged view of Christ's spiritual kingdom, and evince the most discriminative tenderness, for its particular members; especially, for the desolate, that mourn unseen by any but their God; for infancy that cannot, and for criminality that might not dare, approach the throne of mercy. We are taught, first, to seek the providential and gracious government of 'the holy Church universal;' the temporal and spiritual welfare of our own national Church, and of its earthly head; the peculiar 'blessing and keeping of God's faithful people,' and the prevalence of 'unity, peace, and concord' among the nations, as preparatory to the enlargement, and final establishment, of our Saviour's promised dominion. Our own personal concern, in that kingdom, is next, distinctly, and instructively, adverted to. We ask from God, as the foundation of all other blessings, the essence of religion; that union of divine love and holy dread in the heart, which, alone, can produce a life of

uniform and diligent obedience. We then seek, advancement in religion, that 'increase of grace,' which hears the word of God 'with meekness,' receives it with 'purity of affection,' and, like a grateful soil, continually transmutes it into 'the fruits of righteousness.' And we provide for every casualty, and variety, to which a state of grace is liable, by intreating our great benefactor, to reduce the wanderers, to add fresh strength to those that are upright in the way, to invigorate those whose treadings had well-nigh slipt, to raise from their fall, all those who had actually been moved to do evil, and to grant all his militant servants, a final triumph over their spiritual adversary. These are the subjects of prime solicitude in our supplications, as they are, assuredly, of unspeakable importance, to all that name the name of Christ, and hold the hope of Heaven. Thus it is, that, in the spirit of our Lord's divine injunction, we are taught to seek first, to seek supremely, "the kingdom of God and his righteousness."

But our Litany, also, leads us to imitate the benevolence of Him, who "took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." It teaches us to pour forth the intercessions of unfeigned love; to beseech the Father of mercies, 'that it may please him to succour, help, and comfort, all

that are in danger, necessity, and tribulation ; of whose several exigences, an enumeration follows ; so full, that, perhaps, no additional class of peril or affliction can be specified ; so appropriate, that our whole language cannot furnish juster expressions ; and so affectionate, that it has, doubtless, awakened and cherished the most kindly feelings, and most indefatigable exertions, of multitudes now employed in better worlds, and higher ministrations of mercy. Attention having been thus paid, to the souls, and bodies of men, the whole branch of intercession is summed up, in two short petitions ; the one, for temporal good, implied under ‘ the kindly fruits of the earth ; ’ the other, a brief abstract of our spiritual wants, which are all reducible to pardon for the past, grace for the present, and improvement for the future.

I have, thus, endeavoured, to give some specimens, of that holy activity of thought, that wide, yet well-regulated range of mind, to which we are invited by our morning worship. But, it must not be omitted, that the Hymns, by which the service is enlivened, correspond, with peculiar suitableness, to this most desirable purpose. The daily call given us, by the ninety-fifth Psalm, to worship God in his sanctuary ; both as the author of that magnificence of nature

That the authors of our Liturgy were really desirous to cherish such feelings, will appear still more clearly, by attending to that distinguishing feature in our Evening Service, — the first daily Collect. It supposes the mind not wholly dissatisfied with itself, on a review of its inward, and outward conduct; yet entirely referring whatever is estimable in itself, whether ‘holy desires, good councils, or just works,’ to Him, from whom all good proceeds. It looks, however, beyond its present sincerity of religion; and asks for that “peace of God, which passeth all understanding;” it feels, as all must feel, at the season of reflection and retirement, that it is not enough, to be supported through the best course of duty, with integrity, or even with cheerfulness; there must be a resource for the evening, as well as strength for the day; there must be a tranquil home in a man’s own bosom, in which, after having served his fellow-creatures, he may enjoy himself. This has been the wish, of every thinking mind, in every age: but it is what God, alone, is able to bestow. To Him, therefore, do we say, ‘Give unto thy servants, that peace which the world cannot give.’ And what, my brethren, is this peace? It is a peace which rests on no presumptuous confidence, no visionary illusion; it arises out

of that "wisdom from above," which "is first pure, then peaceable;" it is founded on a 'heart set to obey God's commandments;' and, as the earliest result of this righteousness, is "peace," its maturer fruit, can be no other than "quietness, and assurance for ever." This holy calm, then, we ask from Him, who maketh the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice. We ask, 'that we, being delivered from the fear of our enemies, may pass our time in rest and quietness;' a petition, of far deeper and happier import, than the world is commonly aware of; for what is this, but to ask that we may possess that perfect "love of God, which casteth out fear;" which endears every pure enjoyment, and fills up every calm interval, of life; and which, whether at the close of the day, or at the close of this mortal existence, will, alike, enable us to lie down in peace, and take our rest; assured, that our ever-present and ever-gracious God, maketh us to dwell in safety.

And now, my brethren, even on the evidence of this very imperfect statement, may we not assert, that our Morning and Evening Service, taken together, make exquisite provision for a happy day? May we not, without exaggeration, apply the words of Cicero, and exclaim, that 'A day truly so spent, would be preferable to a

sinning immortality! But the day, of which a picture is thus drawn, is only an epitomized specimen of a holy life; it is, in fact, a whole course of piety, compressed into narrow limits, that it may be distinctly contemplated, and repeatedly brought before our view. But we are invited, earnestly invited, to extend this blessedness, through the whole scope of our earthly existence; nay, we are assured, that, if we fervently, and faithfully engage in this career of Christian-virtue, our happiness will be continually heightening; still approaching, nearer and nearer, to the happiness of heaven; still more brightly anticipating that fulness of diversified employment, and yet of beatific rest, which awaits the spirits of the just, in the mansions of our Father.

And this be assured, as it is a just tribute to the religion of our Liturgy, so it is the highest commendation which language can bestow: for full occupation is the very soul of happiness; and what does all I have been saying amount to, but this, that our Morning and Evening Service open a field of inexhaustible occupation, to the noblest faculties of the mind and heart? The worst sufferings, of the most wretched beings, whom we see around us, — sufferings in comparison with which, bodily pain or temporal calamity, be it ever so grievous, shrink into insig-

nificance, — the worst sufferings of the wretched, may be traced, through a variety of channels, to want of employment, as their unhappily prolific source. This is often bitterly felt, by those, whom the world esteems most busy and active, most enterprizing and successful. In numberless instances, while the body is engaged, and even while the intellect is strained to its utmost pitch, the highest powers of the soul, those to which all the rest should serve but as obedient ministers, are unelicited, and unoccupied; left to prey upon themselves, for want of suitable objects; and to make “the whole head sick, and the whole heart faint,” by the tormenting consciousness that ‘something is wanting’ which this world, and all its concerns, are utterly incompetent to supply. The truth is, man was not made for earth alone. Formed in the image, and for the service, of his Maker, he unconsciously pants after his great Original and End. And hence, we may understand, why it is, that the loveliest scenes of this visible creation, are so often felt to be a dreary prison. For what is the value of that prospect, which a present Deity does not cheer, and gladden, and illuminate, by the light of his countenance? What provision is there, to prevent even a second paradise, from becoming a desert wilderness, if, by the absence of genuine

religion, it be disjoined from God's gracious empire? Yes, it is indispensable to our life, and health, that we should breathe a pure, and holy element, which, like the air of the material world, may diffuse itself through every space and period of our being: and such, precisely, is the devotion, of which our Liturgy affords an exemplification. This will accompany us, in leisure, or in business; in private, or in public; when we rise up, and when we lie down: far from disqualifying us for active pursuits, it will give us such vigour, such alertness, such calm, but persevering activity, as will enable us to excel even the worldling, in what he deems his own peculiar province; as will secure, the prompt and effectual performance of whatever is really conducive, to our temporal well-being. Whilst, instead of being "careful and troubled about many things," we shall be supremely solicitous for "the one thing needful."

Let us, then, my brethren, intreat of God, as the first, and greatest of all blessings; let us exert ourselves, as if infinitely more than life itself were the cause at issue; let us strive and pray, not depending on our own strength, but on God's gracious influence, that the devotion of our Liturgy, may become the very element we breathe. The result will be inexpressibly satisfactory and glorious. In the discharge of active

and social duties, in labours of beneficence and brotherly love, in the study and contemplation of divine truth, in continual inspection of our own hearts, and watchfulness over our own tempers, we shall then find occupation, ever new, and ever delightful; we shall then, with steadiness and continuity of effort, pursue after still higher degrees of holiness and happiness; we shall then experience no melancholy void, no listless vacancy, no weariness of life; our whole scope of existence will then be filled, and filled with the most satisfactory, the most diversified, and yet the most unchangeable objects. Whilst, in a blessed interchange of action and contemplation, of extended usefulness to our fellow-creatures, and devout but cheerful converse with our Maker, God and eternity, will be continually brought before us, not only divested of terrors, but as the happiest objects of our contemplation; for we shall, then, be assured, that God will be our portion, through all the changes of eternity.

And, now, my brethren, "unto God's gracious mercy and protection, we commit you; the Lord bless you, and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious unto you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace, both now and for evermore!"

AMEN!

DISCOURSE V.

PSALM xxix. 2.

GIVE THE LORD THE HONOUR DUE UNTO HIS NAME ; WORSHIP
THE LORD, WITH HOLY WORSHIP.

WE have already seen, that, in the two services of Morning and Evening Prayer, our Church has compressed a whole course of piety, within the limits of a single day; thus enabling us, both clearly to discern, and frequently to review, the obligations of our Christian calling: while the rules, the motives, and the spirit of the Gospel, are so applied to the practice of daily life; as to bring its lessons within the reach of the plainest, and least discursive understanding.

But the prospect elsewhere opens into the entire range of human life: it associates youth with manhood, our earliest infancy with our maturest years; and so connects the present, with the future, and the past, as to meet the demands

of a confirmed faith, and to provide spiritual instruction, for the most enlarged and comprehensive minds.

This provision for our highest wants, is especially contained in the two Sacramental Offices. We there obtain, at one view, an insight into our Christian profession, from its commencement to its consummation; from the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, to that perfection, both of holiness and of enjoyment, which, in accordance with holy Scripture, our Church considers attainable, by the mature followers of our Redeemer; by those, whom Saint John describes, as "fathers in Christ."

By the Office of Baptism, we are instructed how to begin the Christian life well: and, for the constant sustenance of that life, we may draw effectual supplies, from the Service of the Lord's Supper.

In the present discourse, I will confine myself to the former of these subjects. A narrow limit, for so full a theme. May God, of his goodness, enable me so to speak, and you so to hear and apprehend, that the words faithfully spoken, may "minister grace unto the hearers!"

Taking for its foundation the first principle of all revealed truth, the Baptismal Service opens, with an acknowledgement of our original

wretchedness,—‘forasmuch as all men are conceived and born in sin.’ From this humble confession of our lost estate, it immediately proceeds, to point out the only means of restoration: certifying, after the divine authority of our Redeemer, that ‘none can enter into the kingdom of God, except he be regenerate, and born anew, of water, and of the Holy Ghost.’ And thus, in two short sentences, it sets forth the entire ground-work of personal Christianity.

For who, that honestly consults his own heart and conscience, must not feel, that man is, by nature, prone to evil; that he is “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked;” that, by his own strength, he is utterly powerless, to rise from the death of sin, to the life of righteousness; and, that he, therefore, stands infinitely in need of an Almighty Deliverer? And who, that faithfully hearkens to the voice of God in Scripture, and to the plain words of our divine Redeemer there recorded, must not own, that Baptism, by water, and by the Holy Ghost, is the sole appointed method of admission, to the blessings and privileges of the Gospel?

Nor, while bound, implicitly to receive this scriptural ordinance, ‘according to Christ’s holy institution,’ and in the literal sense of his words, are we, by any means, withheld from modestly,

and reverently, considering the suitableness of the divine appointment. And, for summary proof of it, we need but revert, to the acknowledged condition of fallen man, and to the fundamental character of the scheme of his redemption. Human nature was found, by the Gospel, in a state of utter, and helpless destitution; it was to be restored by the Gospel, wholly as a system of divine grace, and power. Now, the sacred ordinance of Baptism, directly meets the exigences of the case: for, from the very commencement, it takes the great work of salvation, entirely out of the hands of man, and places it altogether in the hands of God. The lesson, which human nature most needs, and least loves to learn, that God is every thing, and man nothing; this all-important lesson, the Sacrament of Baptism inculcates, with authority not to be resisted, and in language not to be misunderstood. This will equally appear, whether we consider the sign enjoined, or the grace conveyed; for the outward baptism with water, has, plainly, no intrinsic, inherent virtue; and the inward baptism, with the Holy Ghost, imparts a virtue altogether super-human; a regeneration, in which the power is of God alone.

Conformably with this scriptural view, the Baptismal Service calls upon us to implore ‘ that,

which, by nature, we cannot have;’ a baptism, not only outward, but inward; a grace, which God only, in his bounteous mercy, can bestow; or, in the concluding words of the introductory address, ‘that we may be baptized with water, and the Holy Ghost; and received into Christ’s holy Church, and be made lively members of the same.’ What it is to be received into Christ’s holy Church, the succeeding Collect most instructively unfolds. The rite of Baptism confessedly finds us, by nature, the prey of sin and death; compassed about, on every side, with overwhelming perils and temptations. When first rescued, then, from such a depth of misery; when newly admitted within the bosom of Christ’s Church, and, there, shielded alike from surrounding, and from indwelling evils,—how touchingly, and how truly, does the baptismal service liken our condition, to that of Noah and his family, entering the ark, amidst the horrors of the deluge? For, as the waters of the great abyss encompassed the righteous patriarch, and his little flock, even so, the abounding flood of iniquity assails, on all sides, the infant, struggling Christian; and, as Noah was borne onward still, by the divine vessel, in peace and security, above the wreck of a perishing world, so, the faithful Christian, who has been received into the Church

by Baptism, will, if only he maintain his faith firm unto the end; be carried, in perfect safety, through all the changes and chances of this mortal life, to rest, finally, and for ever, upon the heavenly mount of God.

With what emotions, then, of love, of gratitude, of trembling hope, and of holy fear, should not we be animated, whenever we read, and reflect on, the words of this baptismal prayer :—

‘Almighty, and everlasting God, who, of thy great mercy, didst save Noah and his family, in the ark, from perishing by water; and, also, didst safely lead the children of Israel, thy people, through the Red Sea, figuring, thereby, thy holy Baptism; and, by the baptism of thy well-beloved Son, Jesus Christ, in the river Jordan, didst sanctify water, to the mystical washing away of sin; We beseech thee, for thine infinite mercies, that thou wilt mercifully look upon this child; wash him, and sanctify him, with the Holy Ghost, that he, being delivered from thy wrath, may be received into the ark of Christ’s Church; and, being steadfast in faith, joyful through hope, and rooted in charity, may so pass the waves of this troublesome world, that, finally, he may come to the land of everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.’

My brethren, season after season, and year after year, we hear and read the words of this inimitable petition. But, do we so hear or read them, as to imbibe their spirit? Do they touch our consciences? Do they reach, and dwell in, our hearts? Again and again, we witness, we unite in, the celebration of the Baptismal Sacrament. But, while we attend the new-born infant to his second birth; while we join with the congregation, in offering him up unto the Lord; while we ourselves pronounce his baptismal vows, and solemnly promise, in his behalf, renunciation of 'the devil, and all his works;' relinquishment of 'the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same;' and crucifixion of 'the carnal desires of the flesh;' while we thus pray, or promise, in the name of infant innocence, do we always remember, do we ever duly recollect, that the case is our own? That, by the same solemn vow, promise, and profession, we also have been dedicated to the service of God? That this vow, promise, and profession, has, or has not, been accomplished in us? And that, according to its accomplishment, or its violation, we must be happy, or miserable, for ever?

But, whether we think, or do not think, on these things, our Church, assuredly, has not

failed, to remind us of their application to us, and of our individual concern in them. After the Gospel has been read, we are made publicly to offer this solemn petition for ourselves:— ‘Almighty and everlasting God, heavenly Father, we give thee humble thanks, that thou hast vouchsafed to call *us* to the knowledge of thy grace, and faith in thee: increase this knowledge, and confirm this faith in us, evermore.’ That is, in other words, we pray, that the inceptive grace, by which we were regenerated in Baptism, may be so cherished, in our hearts and minds, that it may ripen into that perfective Grace of God, which bringeth forth the choicest fruits of the Spirit.

In the certain assurance, therefore, that our interest in the Baptismal Office, commencing in earliest infancy, must continue through the whole of life; that the responsibility then incurred, and the duties then enjoined, must grow with our growth and strengthen with our strength;—let us faithfully compare the testimony of our own hearts, with the language of our venerable Church. We, elsewhere, profess to believe of Baptism, that, ‘being by nature born in sin, and the children of wrath, we are hereby made the children of grace.’ And are we not, indeed, conscious, that this imparted

grace is needful for us? If not, we must have been careless observers of human nature, and still more careless inspectors of our own consciences. For every one of us, who thinks at all, must feel, that man, in his natural state, has deep ground of uneasiness, of a moral and practical kind, which arises from a sense of sin; an uneasiness, which can be allayed, by nothing short of a moral, and rational relief; which no visionary persuasion, no voice from heaven, could effectually dispel; which leads the sufferer to exclaim, with the Psalmist, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me:" or, in the language of Saint Paul, "Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" An uneasiness, which, consequently, can be removed by nothing less, than a real change of nature; than 'a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness.'

For this inborn tendency, this instinctive effort, of fallen nature, to arise; of the spirit of man, to awake, from the death of sin, to the life of righteousness,—provision is fully made, in our Baptismal Service. In the first Collect, we implore 'deliverance from God's wrath.' But, in what is this deliverance made to consist? Not in the reversal of a sentence, not in the

removal of a curse; not in any transaction, confined, if we may so speak, to Heaven's chancery, and of which, no other than a supernatural assurance could be afforded. No, my brethren, the deliverance is moral, is spiritual, is to be effected within our own souls. It consists, as the same Collect proceeds to instruct us, in being 'washed and sanctified with the Holy Spirit:' and its reality is to be ascertained, by evidence which is subject to the most rational investigation, by its subsequent effects, on the tempers and habits of our lives. For it is certain, that we do not retain the grace or privileges of our Christian Baptism, except so far as, in the beautiful language of the Office, we are, 'stedfast in faith, joyful through hope, and rooted in charity.' This is 'the remission of our sins,' as it is well expressed in the next prayer, 'by spiritual regeneration:' their remission, in other words, "by the renewing of the Holy Ghost," or, as Saint Paul elsewhere expands the same sentiment, "by putting on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness, and true holiness." This is the remission, which our blessed Redeemer did, and suffered, so much, in the flesh, to purchase for us: the remission to obtain which, He offered up, in his own adorable person, 'a full, perfect,

and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world.'

Let us, then, be careful, as we value our everlasting peace, that we never lose sight of the inward and spiritual character, of this remission of our sins. Let us beware, lest we substitute a presumptuous confidence, in what has been done for the world at large, for the happy consciousness of that blessed change, which our gracious Redeemer is ever solicitous, and ever ready, to effect within ourselves. Let us always remember, that, in the language of our Church, and of holy Scripture, the remission of sins is not notional, but real; that it is not, merely, to be laid hold of, outwardly, by a strong effort of the understanding, but to be inwardly known and felt, by the convincing evidence, of a clean heart, and a renewed spirit. In a word, let us ever be mindful, that our sins are remitted, only so far as they are removed; and that the only scriptural, and reasonable method, of ascertaining our spiritual condition, is to inquire, are we, indeed, brought "from darkness unto light?" Have we, of a truth, been drawn "from the power of Satan unto God?" Have we, in reality, "put on the Lord Jesus Christ," and been enabled by Him, "to walk in all godliness of conversation?"

Such inquiries are especially suggested, by the concluding words of the Baptismal Office:—
‘Remembering always, that Baptism doth represent unto us our profession; which is, to follow the example of our Saviour Christ, and to be made like unto Him; that, as He died and rose again for us, so should we, who are baptized, die from sin, and rise again unto righteousness, continually mortifying every evil and corrupt affection, and daily proceeding in all virtue and godliness of living.’

But how, it may be asked, are the benefits and blessings of spiritual regeneration conferred upon infants, in their tender years? To this inquiry, we need not be careful to reply: we need only state, that, in this, as in various other instances, it hath pleased Almighty God to set limits to the presumptuousness of human curiosity; and thus, at once, to try our humility and our faith. It is enough for us, to rest assured, that God is now, and ever, the same all-good and gracious Parent; that, as in times past, it was “out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, He perfected praise;” and as “He revealed unto babes, those things which were hidden from the wise and prudent,” so He is, at all times, abundantly able to pour forth the dew of his blessing, upon infants who are faithfully brought

to the baptism of his Son. It is enough for us, to believe and cherish the prevalent sentiment of the universal Church, as it has been maintained from the age of the apostles, that, at the time of Baptism, a new nature is divinely communicated; and gracious privileges are especially vouchsafed, in such measure and degree, that whosoever are clothed with this white garment, may, through God's help, 'keep their baptism pure and undefiled, for the remainder of their lives, never wilfully committing any deadly sin.'

To a maintenance of Christian purity, thus stedfast and continual, our Church hopefully looks forward, throughout this most instructive and edifying service. We are taught to implore, for all infants who come to the hallowed font of baptism, not only present grace, but power 'to lead the rest of their lives according to this good beginning.' We are invited to pray for these little ones, 'that, in them, the old Adam may be so buried, that the new man may be raised up in them; that all carnal affections may die in them, and that all things belonging to the Spirit, may live and grow in them; that they may have power, and strength, to have victory, and to triumph against the devil, the world, and the flesh; and, finally, that they

may be endued with heavenly virtues, and, ever remaining in the number of God's faithful and elect children, may be everlastingly rewarded, through his mercy, who liveth, and governeth all things, world without end.'

Such is the erect and vigorous posture, which our Church wishes, that all her members may habitually maintain; and with this posture, how exactly harmonizes that noble description of the Christian warrior, which immediately follows: 'That he shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified; and manfully to fight, under his banner, against sin, the world, and the devil; and to continue Christ's faithful soldier, and servant, unto his life's end.'

It is unquestionable, that, by God's blessing on early religious education, and, especially, on the pious watchfulness of Christian parents, there ever have been, and now are, bright examples of pure and undefiled religion: who have never sinned away their baptismal grace; who, from early youth, have maintained a blessed course of innocence and virtue; who have uniformly loved the beauty and pleasure of goodness; who, following in the footsteps, and strengthened by the grace, of our adorable Redeemer, have walked, stedfastly, with their God, unseduced by the blandishments of vice,

and unspotted by the pollutions of the world. But it must be confessed, and deplored, that such instances are lamentably rare; that the great majority of those who profess and call themselves Christians, have sinned, have grievously sinned, and come short of the glory of God. This, my brethren, is matter of grief and shame: but, blessed be the Father of mercies, it is not matter of despair! Our Church assures us, in her sixteenth Article, and she has the undoubted warrant of Scripture for the assertion, that 'the grant of repentance is not to be denied to such as fall into sin after baptism;' and that, 'after we have received the Holy Ghost, we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin; and, by the grace of God, we may rise again, and amend our lives.'

But this consolatory assurance, affords no encouragement to a continuance in sin: far otherwise: it plainly intimates, that grace and sin are incompatible; it virtually declares, that, whilst we continue in the commission of any known sin, we have relinquished the grace and privileges of our Baptism; in other words, that we are no longer 'children of God;' that we are out of a state of filial favour and acceptance; that we are self-estranged from the divine blessing, and protection; and are in danger of an eternal exclusion,

from God's glorious presence ! If these be strict and searching truths, they are the strict and searching truths of Scripture ; whose declarations are, that " the pure in heart " alone " shall see God ; " that " without holiness, no man shall see the Lord."

As, then, we would be happy, here and hereafter, let us now try and examine ourselves ; and ' that not lightly, and after the manner of dissemblers with God ; ' not by the deceitful estimate of our own imagination, but by the unerring standard of the divine law. Delay may be dangerous, may be fatal. The question is, have we retained the grace of Baptism, by innocence of heart and life ; or, if conscience accuse us of past offences, have we recovered that grace, by deep, sincere, and universal repentance ? If neither of these alternatives be our case, then, my brethren, we are unsafe ; we are yet in our sins ; we can have no calm resting-place within our own bosoms ; we are unprepared for that great change, which awaits us all, from time into eternity.

Try and examine yourselves, therefore, by the word of God, in your Bibles ; by the voice of the Church, in your Prayer-books ; by the witness of conscience, in your own hearts, — whether you be in the faith. That if you are happy, in the consciousness of having kept your Baptismal

covenant, you may rejoice in God your Saviour; or that, if your consciences by sin are accused, you may seek, while yet there is time, and seek successfully, for pardon, restoration, and establishment, in the ways of God's laws, and in the works of his commandments.

In our Baptism, we have been dedicated to the service of a heavenly Master; even the great Captain of our salvation: have we approved ourselves faithful servants, obedient followers, good soldiers, of a chieftain so gracious, so divine a Lord? In our Baptism, we received gifts, from this heavenly dispenser of his Father's bounties, far more efficacious and abundant, than were bestowed on patriarchs, and prophets of old time: have we employed them, to God's glory, and to the sanctification of our own souls? Which of you has thus cherished the grace, then shed abroad in your hearts by the Holy Ghost? Nay, who among you, can answer to your consciences, or to your God, that you have not often broken through those merciful restraints, which would have withheld you from all evil? That you have not frequently resisted those gracious influences, which would have drawn you to all good? You have been baptized, indeed, but what account do you make of your Baptism? In what light do you regard it? does it often, does it ever, occur to your minds, that

Baptism is more than a mere ceremony, which accompanies the imposition of a name? Do you often, do you ever, recall to your remembrance, that it is a Sacrament, instituted and ordained by Christ himself; a Sacrament, communicative of graces, for which we must all strictly render account before His judgment-seat? There is not, I trust and believe, a single individual among you, who would accept the wealth of worlds, to say, with deliberation, *I am not a Christian*; yet, have you ever weighed the amount of the opposite declaration, which not one among you would hesitate to make, — *I am a Christian*? For what is it to be a Christian? Is it not to be conformed, as far as human nature is capable of such conformity, to the likeness of God? Is it not to live above the present evil world; to mortify, and to subdue, every irregular desire; to resist steadfastly all the open violence, and guard cautiously against all the treacherous malignity, of our great spiritual foe? What is it to be a Christian? Is it not to die with Christ, to rise with Him, to be like Him; to know that which is true; to love that which is good, to practise that which is holy; to possess the very life and strength of inward purity, and outward virtue; to be “rooted and grounded in love!” to be, like the apostle, “able to do all things, through Christ which strength-

eneth us;" to be "more than conquerors, through Him that loved us;" in a word, to be in actual ripeness for heaven, and to anticipate its blessings, even while sojourning in the wilderness of this mortal life?

This, my brethren, is Christianity, as it is described by the voice of truth, in the language of inspiration; and as it has been drawn from the pure source of Scripture, by our venerable reformers. With this pattern it is, that you are to compare your thoughts, your feelings, your tempers, and the habitual practice of your lives.

Some of you, are yet in the morning of life; full of hopes, and full of promise; a few years only, have elapsed, since you were brought to the baptismal font; and you are, just now, approaching the most critical period of your lives. To you, then, my young friends, I would address a few words of affectionate exhortation. I trust, you are yet innocent, and unperverted; that you have not yet been seduced by the deceitfulness of sin. Consider, then, what a prize you have in your hands; and be zealous, "that no man take your crown." Consider, that, if God and angels rejoice, at the conversion of an old and great sinner, they must infinitely rejoice, to see a young person stedfastly resisting the allurements of a wicked world. Consider, that *that*

time, which a dying sinner would, if it were possible, give millions of worlds to redeem, is now in your hands, and that you may make a glorious use of it. Consider, that you are yet clothed in the white robe of innocence, and, if you be careful never to defile that garment, you may attain to a portion among those few, who shall walk with Christ in white, for they are worthy. Consider, that, if, by a faithful use of God's grace, you maintain your innocence a few years longer, you may be soon almost out of the danger of temptation; you will escape the bitter pangs of remorse and repentance; you will be raised above that greatest of human miseries, the fear of death; you will, not only without fear, but even with exceeding joy, expect the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ, at the judgment of the great day, and in the glory of the world to come. Consider, in a word, that, if you hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of your hope, firm unto the end, you will be entitled to all those great and inconceivable promises, which our Saviour has made to those who shall overcome¹:

“To him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the

¹ Some sentences in this paragraph, are taken, with slight alteration, from Dr. S. Clarke's best work, his three Essays, on Baptism, &c.

paradise of God. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot his name out of the book of life: but I will confess his name, before my Father, and before his angels. Him that overcometh, will I make a pillar in the Temple of my God; and he shall no more go out, and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem. To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me, in my throne, even as I, also, overcame, and am set down, with my Father, in his throne."

DISCOURSE VI.

HEB. vi. 1.

**THEREFORE, LEAVING THE PRINCIPLES OF THE DOCTRINE OF
CHRIST, LET US GO ON TO PERFECTION.**

IN the preceding discourse, it was intimated, that our Church, in her two Sacramental Offices, presented a view of our Christian profession, from its commencement, to its consummation; from the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, to that perfection, both of holiness, and of enjoyment, which may be attained, by the matured followers of a crucified and glorified Redeemer. It was stated, that, by Baptism, we are instructed how to begin life well: and that, for the constant sustenance of that life, we may draw effectual supplies, by the reception of the Lord's Supper.

In the Baptismal Service, accordingly, we are called to die with Christ, to rise with Him, to

to be like Him. In the Communion Service, we are invited to feed on Christ, to dwell with Him, to be one with Him. In the former, we behold, the divine seed, the essential elements, the ensured progress of our inward Christianity: in the latter we may experience, the nourishment of that seed and its rooting in the heart. The Baptismal Service is grand, solemn, and awakening: the Office of the Lord's Supper, is, at once, sublime, pathetic, and inexpressibly delightful to the well-prepared recipient. The one, authoritatively points out the way in which we should go: the other, guides, supports, and cheers us, in that way. In a word, the one impressively teaches the first principles of the doctrine of Christ; whilst the other, with a gentle but powerful attraction, draws us on to perfection.

The Communion Service, then, may be considered as a luminous commentary on the apostolic injunction of the text: therefore, with a strong but humble hope, that the light of our venerable Establishment may, in this, as in various other instances, be found to illustrate the divine truth of Scripture, I would address you, brethren, as Saint Paul addressed the Hebrew Christians,—“Therefore, leaving the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection.”

By this exhortation, we are not to suppose, that the Apostle meant to set up an unattainable or ideal standard. Such a supposition were wholly inconsistent, both with the analogy of Scripture, and with his own teaching. The Christian maturity which the Gospel inculcates, and which Saint Paul here terms "perfection," is suitable to our nature, and limited by the inherent qualities, as well as by the inevitable weaknesses, of that nature. Our bodies are subject to disease; our animal spirits are often affected by every change in the atmosphere we breathe; our understanding, judgment, and affections, are liable to be obscured by ignorance, perplexed by error, or warped by misconception. And, while thus weighed down, and impeded from within, we have without, a dark, malignant, indefatigable adversary, perpetually on the watch to suggest evil thoughts; and, if we have even paid ordinary attention to the susceptibilities of our nature, we must be conscious, that he has innumerable channels of communication. So long, then, as we remain in the body, it is impossible that we should be altogether free, from conscious infirmities, or unintentional faults; it is inevitable, that doubts, and difficulties, and temptations, will present themselves; perhaps, even in the more advanced stages of our Chris-

tian course, there will arise involuntary impulses to evil: nevertheless, through faith, through prayer, through the constant vigilance of a divine principle within, implanted by the grace of God in Baptism, and keeping always alive in us the sense of the Divine presence, the agency of his holy fear and love,—these impulses may be prevented from ever amounting to actual rebellion: on the contrary, if only we are true and faithful to the indwelling grace of the Spirit of holiness, we may “keep ourselves, so that that wicked one shall not touch us;” we may “war a good warfare;” we may “hold fast faith, and a good conscience,” unwounded by the voluntary commission of any known sin; we may “mortify, through the Spirit, the deeds of the flesh;” we may “watch unto prayer,” so that we shall be divinely enabled to resist the first incursions of evil,—to give, not only no way to sinful impulses, but no indulgence, no quarter, no resting-place in our affections, to sinful thoughts; but in purity of heart, with fervency of spirit, to live supremely to our God. In a word, we have the strongest scriptural assurances, that, if we “pray without ceasing,” if we “quench not the Spirit,” if we “hold fast that which is good,” if we “abstain from all appearance of evil,” “the

very God of peace," will "sanctify us wholly; and our whole spirit, and soul, and body, will be preserved blameless, unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." For, as the apostle beautifully adds, "Faithful is He that calleth us, who also will do it."

This, my brethren, is the perfection spoken of in the text; and to this state of Christian maturity, we are graciously invited, in various parts of God's holy Word. The New Testament repeatedly describes it, in language the most lively and animating, yet, at the same time, the most guarded: uniformly keeping in view, the various powers, and capacities, of man; and never, for a moment, transgressing the bounds of sober sense, and cautious discrimination. But, in no part of the sacred writings, is this blessed condition more luminously portrayed, than in the following passage of Saint Paul: "The end," that is, the fulfilment, the completion, the perfect consummation, "of the commandment, is love; out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned."

After a manner not unusual in Hebrew composition, the last and highest attainment of the Christian life, is, in this passage, placed first. The apostle's words comprize a definition of Christianity, in its source, in its progress, and its

utmost attainable elevation. We are to begin with that faith, which is the root of all evangelic virtue; we are to go on, in the integrity of a tender conscience, walking humbly with our God; we are to ascend, through a course of deep inward purification, from one stage of proficiency to another; until we arrive, in the end, at a state of calm and continual progress in the love of God and man. Further than this, it is impossible to reach; thus far it will not only be our best happiness, but it is our bounden duty and service, to proceed: remembering always the commandment on which the apostle's words are our commentary, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself."

Faith unfeigned; a good conscience; a pure heart; and love, which is the fulfilling of the law. This is a brief but vivid sketch, of the passage from earth to heaven. And perhaps, in no work of uninspired man, are these several stages of our Christian course more distinctly and happily traced, than in the first Collect of the Communion-Service.

The Collect is, in fact, a paraphrase of this passage of Scripture. In it, accordingly, we find our first example, of the manner in which

the pregnant truths of the Bible are expanded, and enforced, in this portion of our Common-Prayer. We there address that 'Almighty God; unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid.' We repeat the words, but do we enter into their real spirit? do we inwardly feel the awakening truths which they convey? If we do thus feel these truths, then, we have "Faith." For faith, in its simplest principle, is the sense of a present God: of a Being, who hath "searched us out, and known us;" who "knoweth our down-sitting, and our up-rising;" "who understandeth our thoughts long before"; who is "about our path and about our bed, and spieth out all our ways." If this sense, this conviction, this faith, be "unfeigned;" if we really and habitually believe, that our 'heart is open' to God's inspection; that our inmost desires are better known to Him, than to ourselves; that no secret of our souls escapes his all-seeing eye; then, we can have no quiet, no rest, no enjoyment, without the possession of "a good conscience," without an humble but sure conviction, that it is our chief endeavour to walk uprightly and conscientiously before God. If we are satisfied on easier terms, we may rest assured, that our faith is feigned; that our religion is delusive; that our worship is a deceitful

sacrifice. But if we indeed have "a good conscience," we will not willingly rest here: we will look beyond mere sincerity of intention: we will rise above the faithfulness of a servant, who scrupulously discharges every outward duty: we will aspire after that spirit of filial piety, which is moved and acted on, wholly by the inward principle of love; which counts no obedience sufficient, short of conformity of heart, to the will and image of our heavenly Father: we will long after, what the Psalmist expressively styles, "Truth in the inward parts;" or, in the distinct and definite exposition of our Communion-Service, we will pray, that God may 'cleanse the thoughts of our hearts, by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit.' This is the main petition of the collect; and, if the object of this petition were once happily achieved, we should then possess all the ingredients of love, all the preliminaries to perfection;—"Faith unfeigned, a good conscience, a pure heart." There would then be no obstacle, no impediment, to the free and gracious course of God's loving-kindness. He would then dwell in our hearts, because our hearts would be prepared for his reception; and, where He dwelleth, there must be perfect love. Thus we perceive, at once, the piety and justness of that noble petition, 'Cleanse the thoughts of our

hearts, by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee.' Purity is the very element of perfect love: "perfect love," we are assured by Scripture, "casteth out fear"; but fear, we know, is inseparable from impurity: "The pure in heart" alone "shall see God;" who, then, but the pure in heart, are qualified to love Him? But it is not merely *love*, that is here sought for; it is *perfect love*. And, assuredly, words cannot convey a more exalted idea of perfect love, than the expressions which immediately succeed: 'that we may perfectly love thee, and *worthily magnify thy Holy Name*.' God's name, my brethren, is essential greatness; in comparison with it, the grandeur of the universe is but "as a drop of the bucket, and as small dust of the balance": "He chargeth his angels with folly," much less, then, was it imaginable, by unassisted reason, that He should be glorified in us, who "dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust." This great mystery He has, however, been graciously pleased to reveal unto us in his sacred Word; and our Church, the faithful interpreter of that Word, proclaims, in this Collect, our glorious privilege. How deep, therefore, how lively, how energetic, must be that perfect love, for which we are here taught to pray; which can be thus deemed not unworthy, to exalt,

as it were, the Majesty of the most High God; not unmeet, to unite in kindred emotions, with those blessed spirits which surround his throne; even to 'laud and magnify his glorious Name, with angels, and archangels, and with all the company of Heaven!'

Even from this short explanation, you will perceive, how excellent a commentary on the words of the text, is supplied by the opening prayer of our Communion-Service. For what does it express, what does it breathe, but wishes the most deep and fervent, for the attainment of "the end of the commandment; for love, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." To what does it invite us, but to the fulfilment of the counsel of the same apostle, "Therefore leaving the principles of the Gospel of Christ, let us go on to perfection?"

With what just and happy fitness, then, is this Collect made immediately to precede the declaration of that Law, the recital of those Commandments, whose end and aim it so perfectly illustrates? The Service proceeds, in true conformity with this good beginning. In the short, and lowly petition, which is offered up, at the close of each commandment, we find a happy unity of spirit, with the prayer which we have

been just considering. These devout ejaculations transform the Law, into the Gospel ; if we may be permitted the expression, they evangelize the whole decalogue ; they impart to it the spirit of a more perfect dispensation ; they convert the law of Moses, into the law of liberty and love. ‘ Lord, have mercy upon us,’ is the humble, but confiding invocation of our Church, ‘ Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law !’ In these edifying words, while, in the spirit of a truly penitent and contrite heart, we implore pardon for our past offences, we seek for the future, not only obedience, not simply a conscientious discharge of duty, not merely the most continual and abiding fear of God ; we seek a far higher gift, a still diviner grace ; we pray, that the inclinations of our hearts may be in unison with the laws of our Maker ; that our duty may become our delight ; that the fulfilment of the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God, may be the very joy of our life ; in a word, that all the commandments and ordinances of our heavenly Father, may be written in our hearts, by the finger of God. And what is this, but to pray for the consummation of holiness, of happiness, of perfect peace ? What is it, but to pray for the accomplishment, within our own souls, of the gracious promise of the Gospel

covenant; even for the full and glorious communication of that good Spirit, which is the sign and seal of the Christian dispensation?—"This is the covenant that I will make, after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people."

What blessedness is this! God "will put his laws into our mind, and write them in our hearts." This is, truly, a blessedness which passeth all human understanding. That law, of which it hath been nobly said, that 'its seat, is the bosom of God, its voice, the harmony of the world,' has, through the everlasting Gospel, descended to dwell among the children of men; to guide their feet in the way of peace; to prepare them for that eternal rest, which remaineth unto the people of God.

Amongst the means which have been divinely instituted, to effect these glorious ends, the Sacrament of the body and blood of our Saviour Christ is, unquestionably, the most salutary and efficacious. For, together with every benefit and blessing which await the faithful performance of all other ordinances of Christian worship, all common offerings of prayer, and praise, and thanksgiving,—in this holy institution, as in the

first Sacrament of Baptism, a divine infusion, a heavenly grace and virtue are peculiarly conveyed into the soul. In Baptism, we originally received this gift of God : by the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, the gift then received, is renewed, enlarged, confirmed, strengthened, perfected. By Baptismal Grace, we first became, properly, temples of the Holy Ghost : by the Grace of the Eucharist we are made special temples, also, of the Son ; an habitation meet for the whole three Persons of the ever-blessed Trinity. For it is the Eternal Truth Himself who hath said, " He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father ; so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." And, in close conformity with our Lord's saying, are the words of our Church in her Communion exhortation : ' The benefit is great, if, with a true penitent heart, and lively faith, we receive that holy Sacrament ; for then we spiritually eat the flesh of Christ, and drink his blood ; then we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us ; we are one with Christ, and Christ with us."

This Holy Institution was appointed, as the exhortation proceeds to instruct us, ' to the end that we should alway remember the exceeding great love of our Master and only Saviour, Jesus

Christ, thus dying for us; and the innumerable benefits, which, by his precious blood-shedding, He hath obtained to us.' Here, therefore, provision is made; in the most solemn office of our Religion, for continually presenting to our minds, and impressing on our hearts, that mystery of redemption which angels desire to look into. For, what is it, that we are here invited and commanded to remember? It is this astonishing truth, that the great and everlasting God, whose throne endureth for ever, the sceptre of whose kingdom is a sceptre of righteousness, who, in the beginning, laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of His hands, in the day of whose most just and terrible judgment, this earth with all its pageants and palaces shall vanish, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll,—that this infinite Being was made man, took our nature upon Him, and 'did humble himself even to the death upon the cross, for us miserable sinners who lay in darkness and the shadow of death, that He might make us the children of God, and exalt us to everlasting life !

What sublime and animating motives are afforded and held forth, in this mysterious transaction ! Can we *indeed* believe, and feel, and continually remember this exceeding great love,

without pressing on towards that perfection, which it was manifested to accomplish? We must be deeply conscious, that this stupendous sacrifice was made for no ordinary or trivial purpose; we must be intimately aware, that its end can be attained by no low or common proficiency in holiness and virtue. Shall we, then, frustrate this great mystery of mercy? Shall we render the blood of the covenant of none effect? Shall it be in vain for us, that Christ has suffered? In that awful hour, inanimate nature was convulsed, the earth did quake, the rocks rent in sunder, the graves were opened, the dead came forth! And shall we, who profess to "name the name of Christ," be more stubborn than the earth, flintier than the rocks, colder than the grave, more lifeless than the dead? Shall we be doubly dead? dead here, in trespasses and sins? dead hereafter, in an everlasting exclusion from the presence of Christ and of God? God forbid, my brethren! In Christ let us be made alive: in Him, and in the power of his might, let us be strong: in Him let us put our trust: and then we shall infallibly discover, that Christ crucified is, of a truth, "the power of God unto salvation."

Thus it was, that the first of human guides, the chief of inspired teachers, the great apostle

of the Gentiles, studied to have Christ, as he expresses it, "formed within" him: that is, to live *in* Him, as the source of grace; to live *by* Him, as the food of faith; to live *to* Him, as the hope of glory. And this divine life, Saint Paul continually connects with the precious remembrance of our Lord's death and passion, delivered in the blessed Sacrament of his body and blood. Whenever there arises an opportunity of adverting to this great mystery, the holy apostle is animated with new life; his whole soul is breathed into his words; but, while his speech is ardent, energetic, impassioned, his spirit is, at the same time, sober, serious, and practical: it is no transient emotion, but a settled habitude of love, and peace, and joy, which dictates every expression. We see, that the death of his Redeemer has become the spiritual sustenance of his soul; he glories in the cross of Christ, because, by that cross, the world is crucified unto him, and he unto the world: he speaks of his own sufferings with sacred delight, as "bearing about in the body, the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life, also, of Jesus, might be manifest in his body;" he tells, with holy triumph, of his being "always delivered to death," because it is "for Jesus' sake, that the life, also, of Jesus might be made manifest, in his mortal flesh."

That Christ has died, is with him no mere outward, ideal belief; it is an impression stamped upon the heart, a truth ever-present to the mind; a principle of grace and power, deep, practical, and influential: from the death of his divine Redeemer, he derives strength, and vigour, and motive, and example, and courage, to do and suffer the hardest things; to deny the flesh, to subdue the world, to resist the devil, to withstand every wrong movement of his lower nature, to be more than conqueror, through Him who loved us.

Thus, therefore, it is, that we also are to remember, as the Church in her Communion Office incites us to remember, 'the exceeding great love of our Master, and only Saviour Jesus Christ, thus dying for us.' And if, through the grace of God, we be enabled so to remember his death, we shall soon learn, to bless his holy name, in the language of the same venerable formulary, for 'the innumerable benefits, which, by his precious blood-shedding, He hath obtained to us.' These benefits will then be realized in our own souls: we shall then find strength, to resist what has hitherto overpowered us; to perform, what has heretofore been too hard for us; to reject, with righteous detestation, the evil that was pleasant to our souls; to de-

light and rejoice in, that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God, which once seemed a harsh and grievous imposition, a burthen too heavy for us to bear: in a word, it will then be given us to "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls."

In inculcating, however, after clear and express authority of Scripture, the real, inward, experimental efficacy of the death of Christ, and of the spiritual sacrifice of his most holy body and blood, our Church is far from desiring to create, or to encourage in her children, the growth of spiritual pride. In her services, a haughty, arrogant, self-sufficient temper, will find no countenance, no resting-place, no room. On the contrary, she both requires and supposes in her faithful and obedient members, a serious, collected, humble frame of mind, at all times to be cherished, but more especially when they approach that holy Sacrament. A deep sense of our original wretchedness, a hearty repentance for our past offences, a thorough consciousness of our present weakness, and an entire reliance on that grace, which we are assured in holy Scripture, and which we may be assured, if we will, by happy experience in our own hearts, is sufficient for us,—this is the preparation, with which, both in the

address on approaching the Lord's Table, and in the general confession, we are taught and commanded to draw near.

But, it is when we kneel down at that holy Table, when the whole man, body, soul, and spirit, is bowed, in lowly prostration, before the altar, that this preparation is embodied in one short, but inimitable prayer: a Collect, which, whether we consider the fewness of the words, or the depth and fulness of the sense, may justly be pronounced, a model of "fervent, energetic prayer:" "We do not presume to come, to this thy Table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy Table. But thou art the same Lord, whose property is always to have mercy: grant us, therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body, and our souls washed through his most precious blood, and that we may evermore dwell in Him, and He in us.'

But, while we are here taught to humble ourselves, in the immediate presence of our God, it is only that He may exalt us in due season. This deep self-abasement is not only compatible with,

it is the living ~~source~~ ^{spring} and fountain of all progress and perfection; it is the spirit which alone can bear our affections heavenward; it is the winged harbinger, of a still higher communion, even of our partnership in that blessed harmony, which fills the Jerusalem above with immortal strains of praise and joy. In our Communion-Service, accordingly, this lowly petition is prefaced by a thanksgiving, which transports the faithful worshipper within the courts of heaven, and which might seem not unworthy to swell the hallelujahs of those blessed abodes: 'Therefore, with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious name; evermore praising Thee, and saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory; glory be to Thee, O Lord most High!'

Thus it is, that the deepest humility, is not only consistent with the happiest assurance, but actually produces that assurance: for, it is certain, that, the more entirely we distrust ourselves, the more victoriously shall we "be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might;" inasmuch as "His strength is made perfect in weakness."

The happy union of Christian lowliness, with Christian exultation, presented to our minds

and hearts in this part of the office, is every where to be met with throughout the New Testament; and is ever most strikingly exemplified, in the most highly honoured servants of God. This spirit it was, that dwelt in the heart, and breathed from the lips, of her who was highly favoured among women, the Virgin Mother of our Lord. When the Roman centurion, with like self-abasement, exclaimed, "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof," then it was, the blessed Jesus answered, "Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel." And when Saint Paul himself was "caught up into the third heaven," and saw and heard unutterable things; the sense of humiliation was divinely awakened in the breast of the holy apostle, "lest," as he tells us, "he should be exalted above measure." With what mingled emotions, therefore, of faith and fear, of prostrate, at once, and of uplifted adoration, should we approach the house, the services, the altar, of our God? With what holy, humble zeal, should we not learn from our Church services, "to serve the Lord with fear; and rejoice before Him with reverence?"

But, like the blessed Gospel, on which her whole services are formed, the lessons of our Church are not meant only for the matured, ad-

vanced, confirmed worshipper: her attention is equally directed to the infirm, the weak, the young in faith. To lead on to spiritual progress, is her great aim: but, with this object in view, "she despises not the day of small things;" she accounts no thought, no wish, no effort, towards recovery or improvement, valueless; even these infant beginnings of the Christian life are precious in her sight. With this view, she is full of tenderness for weak Christians. It is her delight, to lead such gently by the hand: for she well remembers, that Christ gave commission, not only to feed his sheep, but also to feed his lambs. Even in her holiest mystery, hers is no exclusive spirit: she does not require long-confirmed habits of holiness, in order to admission to the Table of the Lord: in all communicants, she desires, indeed, to see the best fruits of Christianity, but not as indispensable pre-requisites to Communion. To qualify for this high privilege, she looks, only, for sincerity, for faith, for a mind in love and perfect charity with all men, for a heart truly desirous to serve and please God for the future, in newness of life: wherever such dispositions exist, there, according to her teaching, exists, also, a fitness for worthily receiving that holy Sacrament; and wherever such dispositions continue to exist,

there must be advancement, sometimes more gradual, sometimes more rapid, but always in conformity with our blessed Lord's example, and in participation of his Spirit. While, if we habitually come to the sacred Table, in spirit, and in truth, each attendance will be blessed to us, by fresh communications of heavenly virtue, and by increase of the grace and power formerly received; until the efficacy of this blessed Sacrament shall become eventually such, that "we all beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, shall be changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

This, brethren, is that "perfection," to which the text exhorts us to aspire, and which our Church, in all her services, would affectionately lead us to attain. It has been already defined, in this concluding discourse on our Liturgy, as a state of calm and continual progress in the love of God and man. With the love of God and man, accordingly, the Church opens that magnificent doxology, in which she would prepare and qualify all those 'who have duly received these holy mysteries, with the spiritual food of the most precious body and blood of our Saviour Christ,' to receive her blessing, and depart in peace; inviting us, with one voice,

and with one heart, to proclaim anew the glad tidings of great joy, with which the song of angels ushered in the Saviour of the world,—
“Glory be to God on high, and in earth peace, good-will towards men!”

Thus closes the holiest, and most solemn, service of our venerable Liturgy. And, with its parting words, I would bring these faithful, though imperfect, attempts to illustrate that Liturgy, to their close: praying that ‘The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, may keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord; and that the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, may be amongst you, and remain with you always!’ *Amen.*

DISCOURSE VII.¹

SAINT MATTHEW, xxviii. 18, 19, 20.

AND JESUS CAME, AND SPAKE UNTO THEM, SAYING,—ALL POWER IS GIVEN UNTO ME IN HEAVEN AND IN EARTH, GO YE, THEREFORE, AND TEACH ALL NATIONS; BAPTIZING THEM, IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY GHOST; TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER I HAVE COMMANDED YOU; AND LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAY, EVEN UNTO THE END OF THE WORLD.

It was the last act of our Lord's earthly ministry, to deliver his instructions, and delegate his authority, to the holy Apostles; and, through the Apostles, to their legitimate successors, in all ages of the Church. This solemn commission is

¹ Written in the year 1810, and preached at an Ordination in the Cathedral Church of Cashel. Afterwards, preached in the chapel of Trinity College, Dublin, as an act Sermon, before the University, for the degree of D.D. in 1821.

breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost;" and, finally, that He entrusted them with the ministerial power, of retaining, and remitting sins.

In this branch of the sacred narrative, each Evangelist, we may well believe, was guided to select the matter suited to his own peculiar sphere. But it is not my present purpose, to consider the propriety of this selection; nor shall I attempt a comparative view of the passages themselves. I will merely submit a few brief remarks, on the words of Saint Mark, and Saint Matthew; in order to settle the just meaning of the text, and to introduce with clearness, the subject of the following discourse.

"Preach the Gospel to every creature," says our Lord, according to Saint Mark. That is, Preach to individuals of all ranks, all countries, all religions, without respect of persons.

"He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned." Words which imply intelligence, capacity, moral responsibility, in the persons to be addressed; and which require actual belief, as a pre-requisite for Baptism.

"And these signs shall follow them that believe. In my name, they shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall

take up serpents; if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." Great and miraculous powers these; conferred, not only on Apostles, but on private Christians; but which, we learn from the unexceptionable testimony of Saint Chrysostom, and Saint Augustine, were very rarely communicated in the fourth century. (1)

From this view, therefore, of the passage of Saint Mark, we may conclude, that it respects the admission within the Christian pale, of adult individual converts; who, before baptism, were to make a credible profession of faith. We may conclude, also, that, as the privilege annexed, was temporary in its operation, the system aided by that privilege, was not intended either to be permanent or universal.

The passage of Saint Matthew, which I have chosen for my text, has a very different, and far more extended application..

"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." When Saint Paul wishes to impress this great truth on the Church of Ephesus, he seems almost to exhaust the copiousness of language; he accumulates the grandest imagery, that can be derived from this world, and the world to come. Not so, with Him, who spake as never man spake,

He expresses without effort, what effort never could attain. The simple grandeur of these plain words bespeaks the character of Him, with whom Omnipotence was familiar and inherent: "Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."

"Go ye therefore." Go forth with alacrity, resolution, and certainty of success. Go, for it is the great Administrator of Heaven and earth who sends you forth; to whom all power is given; and, who will so exert that power, that earth and heaven shall combine, to prosper you in all your ways.

"Go, and teach all nations," or, as it is more correctly rendered in the margin of our English Bible, "Go, and make disciples of all nations. Or, more briefly, and more literally, "Go, and disciple all nations." That is, receive whole communities into the outward, visible profession of Christianity. Make collective bodies of disciples, whom you may afterwards instruct. Let nations be united in the common bond of Catholicity. And let them transmit, from generation to generation, the means of religious worship, and the light of religious truth.

"Baptizing them, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Admitting them within the pale of the Church, by

the Sacrament of Baptism in the name of the Tri-une God. "Baptizing *them*," not individuals, but nations, in their collective capacity; old, and young; learned, and ignorant; one, with another. "The kingdom of heaven," said our Lord, on another occasion, "is like a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind."

"Teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you." Here, be it observed, the order is the reverse of that which obtains in the Gospel of Saint Mark. For, whilst, in the individual plan of adult conversion, instruction and belief are prior to Baptism, in the Collective scheme of national Christianity, Baptism is the first in the order of time. Communities are first to be baptized; then, formed to habits of goodness and piety, by moral and religious training.

"And lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." A promise, not occasional or temporary, like that of miraculous powers: but conveying an assurance, that Christ himself, will, in spirit and in power, be continually present, with his Catholic and Apostolic Church; with the Bishops of that Church, who derive from the Apostles, by uninterrupted succession; and with those inferior, but essential orders of the Church,

which are constituted by the same authority, and dedicated to the same service. It is a pledge of the divine faithfulness and truth, that, amidst the vicissitudes of human affairs, the decay of nations, the obliteration of languages, the dissolution of empires, — that, even at that prophetic period, when “the spirits of devils, working miracles, shall go forth into the kings of the earth, to gather them together to the battle of the great day of God Almighty,” that, even then, “the gates of hell shall not prevail,” but Christ will comfort, will protect, and will enlarge his little flock; whilst, “unto the principalities and powers, in heavenly places, shall be known, by the Church, the manifold wisdom of God.” (2)

This wisdom, manifold in its operation, but uniform in its design, while it is especially exercised in the guidance of the Church, can be adequately apprehended, only by superior beings. Men “see but in part, and prophesy in part;” and much, probably, of their instrumental usefulness depends on the fact, that they know not what they do. Not so, with those angels of God, who perform his pleasure: they have a nearer prospect of his great designs; and what mortals view but partially, they contemplate as a whole; and what, to us, may seem irregular and confused, is, to them, a scene of regularity and

order. Amidst the collision of jarring interests, and the tumult of conflicting passions, they discern the hand of the Supreme Disposer, controlling all events for the improvement of his Church. The surface of the waters may be vexed with storms, but the ark of Christianity they know to be secure (3); they know, that the under-current of Providence is bringing, and will bring it, to "the haven where it would be."

And we too, after the measure of our capacities, may share in these consolatory views. For, though much be hidden, much, also, is revealed; and though much be obscure, much, also, is discernible. Let but our inquiries be guided by the light of Scripture, and confined within the limits of historical experience, and moderated by sobriety of mind, and pursued with integrity of purpose, and then we may, in some degree, be qualified to adore, and, in our humble walk, to co-operate with, the high providence of God.

It must, indeed, be admitted, that ecclesiastical historians have seldom regarded or exhibited the Church, as the great sphere of providential wisdom. Their gloomy estimate too generally presents a revolting detail, of persecutions on the one hand, and sufferings on the other; of heresies in faith, and enormities in practice; of ambition, descending to the vilest artifices of intrigue; of

controversies, wrought to the last edge of exasperation; of superstition, devoting her victims to voluntary torments; of fanaticism, violating the common decencies of life; every where the name and pretext of religion, her spirit and power no where; or, if, indeed, she be allowed an existence amongst men, we are sent to seek her obscure and casual asylum, in mountains, and valleys, and dens, and caves of the earth. Such is the portraiture commonly drawn of the Christian Church; especially from the fourth, to the sixteenth century. The picture might, probably, have been less aggravated and extreme, if writers had been mindful, that, while such flagrant abuses were foretold in prophetic Scripture (4), the same Scripture also foretold, that, in the Church itself, God's faithful worshippers shall never fail; that, though "the Holy City was given to the Gentiles, to be trodden under foot," very special care was, at the same time, taken, "to measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein."

The truth is, two very important considerations have, for the most part, been overlooked: namely, the continuous character of the Church; and the inevitable mixture of evil in its progress, towards eventual improvement and perfection.

The Church, then, be it specially observed, is not a simple accumulation of individuals: but it is what Holy Scripture declares it to be, a regulated society, an organized body; preserving through successive ages, its identity of essence, and unity of spirit; receiving, from time to time, a continual increment of members, and through the instrumentality of those members, deriving growth, and strength, and gradual advancement towards that complete maturity, when it shall attain unto "the measure, of the stature, of the fulness, of Christ." In examining, therefore, the records of the Christian Church, no event, or practice, or opinion, should be viewed abstractedly, or without some reference to the distant, or the future; without some estimate of its growing consequences, and final results; without some effort to ascertain its place in the providential scheme, its share in that great moral process, by which the whole mass of society will, at the end, be leavened; and "the kingdoms of this world, shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ."

Again; we must be mindful, that, in this providential process, there is an inevitable mixture of evil. If, indeed, men were either moral machines, or impeccable intelligences, we might fairly expect an equable, uninterrupted course

of things; probably, without any characters eminently good; and, certainly, without any bad characters, bad habits, or bad actions. But mankind, endowed with the knowledge of good and evil, and with the capability of much evil, or of much good, are, to a considerable degree, the arbiters of their own destiny. And, stunned as they are, and deteriorated, by the fall (5), the motions of all those, who refuse to place themselves under the directing grace of God, must, to say the very least, be inconstant and irregular. When such beings, then, are introduced into any society; and when, as in the visible Church of Christ, they constitute the vast majority of that society, evils are, in that case, altogether inevitable. How, then, let us ask ourselves, does the matter stand? Either the erring and the weak must have been excluded from the Church and Christianity, and thus consigned to irretrievable destruction; or they must have been admitted into the Church, with some apparent loss of order to that body. The latter course has graciously been taken: the weak, and wicked, have been received into the visible Church, as into a great house of recovery; and the consequences have been none other, than were foreseen, and foretold, by the divine Author of Christianity, and head of the Church.

"It is impossible," said our blessed Lord, "but that offences will come."

The wisdom, therefore, and the graciousness of God, are manifested, not in exterminating evil, at the expence of moral agency, by an arbitrary act of exclusion; but, in gently, yet powerfully, overcoming evil with good (6): not in extirpating the tares, at the hazard of destroying the wheat; but, in converting the tares themselves, into a shelter for the tender and unripened ears of corn. And the Church, to be viewed with advantage, must be viewed as the sphere of a great remedial process, in which light and shade, prosperity and adversity, good and evil, are so blended and attempered, as to secure a final issue, of the greatest possible purity, piety, and enjoyment, to the greatest possible number of just men made perfect, through all the ages of eternity.

In the first three centuries, the Church was providentially secluded from society at large. Immoral Christians were, during this period, comparatively rare. For what mere votary of this world, would embrace a pure and strict religion, with the certainty of exclusion from temporal honours and advancement, and at the imminent peril of obloquy, persecution, and an ignominious death? Miraculous powers were

the sole external aid afforded to the infant Church; we do not find, that these powers were, or could be, exercised for the advantage of those, on whom they were conferred; and they probably rather called attention to the facts, than directly promoted the adoption of the Christian faith. But, however this may be, it was by trial and persecution, that the strength of the Gospel was chiefly proved, and its divine origin triumphantly established. To the sanguinary edicts of emperors, and to the yet more sanguinary execution of those edicts, we are indebted both for the proverbial heroism of confessors and martyrs, and for the masterly apologies of the Ante-Nicene Fathers, which, on the one hand, shook to the very centre the fabric of Gentile superstition, and on the other, demonstrated the truth, at once, and efficacy, of our holy religion. And thus, while the Church, like its Divine Founder, was "made perfect by sufferings," it was proved to have a spirit and a principle, fitted, in due time, to act upon the whole habitable world.

When the period arrived, for commencing this extended process, Constantine issued his edict; and Christianity became the established religion of the empire (7). The impulse thus given, was rapidly communicated. The protection of

the ruling powers, became a compensation for miraculous gifts; and national proselytism, was substituted for individual conversion. Missionaries of the faith, diffused themselves through every quarter of the globe. Provinces and nations, paid homage to the Saviour of the world. They were Baptized, according to our Lord's injunction, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. And, though many, doubtless, remained pagans in their hearts; though many more, were influenced by sordid secular motives; and though a still greater number, merely fell in with the prevailing current, it cannot fairly be questioned, that the general result was beneficial; or that every seeming disadvantage of national establishments, was more than compensated, by the number of exemplary Christians, added to the Church; by the sure transmission, at least, of the Christian name, and often of the Christian spirit, from father to son, and from generation to generation; by the permanence, secured to orthodox confessions of faith; by the uniformity, given to liturgical offices of devotion; by the dignity, imparted to solemn acts of worship; by the tendency of national establishments, to unite the various orders of society, and to promote the completion of God's great

design, of bringing the whole world "to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God."

But, while, by the establishment of Christianity, the Church was delivered from outward persecution, her peace was disturbed, by more domestic and interior evils: by a laxity of public morals, and a multiplication of heretical opinions. Each of these, however, was providentially mitigated and over-ruled.

To the superficial observer, indeed, the Christian community must appear to have now suffered a great moral declension. Let it, however, be considered, that her boundaries were much and suddenly enlarged; that the Church and the world were now, for the first time, visibly united; that the wicked were, every where, obvious and obtrusive, while the good, for the most part, were holding their noiseless, but most beneficial course, in the low vale of obscurity(8); finally, let it be considered, that, in fulfilment of our Lord's prophetic parable, the leaven was now *hid* in the three measures of meal; that is, in other words, Christianity was brought into close contact with the mass of society; for the purpose, by a slow, and scarcely perceptible process, of assimilating to itself, the whole race of mankind. The Church, there-

fore, was not deteriorated; but the world was taken into a course of improvement. The mass of evil in society, was not increased; there is, indeed, the best evidence, that it was materially diminished; evidence, which extorted a reluctant, but most eloquent tribute of admiration, even from the sceptical and insidious historian of the Roman Empire¹. On the whole, it might be well, if, instead of deploring what the Church became, by its contact with the world, people were to consider, what the world would now be, if it had not been united with the Church.

Again; the heresies, which, especially, from the fourth century, agitated the Church, are commonly viewed with unmingled feelings of regret. But these, too, were forced to discharge a providential function (9): for these strange opinions, occasioned a more profound and settled veneration, by promoting a more intense and ardent study, of the sacred Scriptures; these strange opinions, procured for the great Catholic verities a more severe examination, a larger body of evidence, and a clearer method of announcement, than had previously obtained. To these strange opinions, we are indebted for the

¹ Decl. and Fall, vol. vi. p. 275—277, ed. Lond. 1802.

just and scriptural decisions, of many general councils ; composed, indeed, of fallible men, and sometimes including men of questionable character, yet, however they may have sanctioned smaller errors, carefully guarding every essential article of faith, and every sound principle of morals. And finally, to these strange opinions, we are indebted for a closeness of thought, and a precision of language, before unknown in theological inquiries. ‘Till Arianism had made it a matter of great sharpness and subtilty of wit, to be a sound believing Christian,’ says the learned Hooker, ‘men were not curious what syllables or particles of speech they used.’ And, whatever may have been the opinion of this great man, the consideration of several particulars, both before and after the period when he was an ornament of the English Churches, obliges me to conclude, that this curiosity of expression, has been an invaluable benefit to the Christian world : both, in protecting the doctrine of the blessed Trinity, against the subtle devices of innovating spirits ; and, in leading men to discover and appreciate, the exact propriety, the orderly connection, the felicitous arrangement, and the philosophical precision, which on the mere ground of enlarged

and liberal criticism, place the sacred Scripture, infinitely above all other volumes.

It remains to be observed, (and in thus observing I do not mean to palliate error) that those less essential mistakes, which, from time to time, prevailed in the ancient Church, and those grosser faults, which afterwards disfigured the Church of Rome, had important providential uses. Thus, the excessive multiplication of rites and ceremonies, which reduced Christianity, almost to a religion of the senses, was well calculated to impress, with some religious awe, and some devotional feeling, the rude barbarians of the darker ages. And thus, perhaps, the strange and unscriptural tenet of transubstantiation, introduced in the twelfth century, at the same period with the unitarianism of the notorious Peter Abelard, may have served as a check and counterpoise to that impious heresy. For the adoration of the mass, cannot, by any plausibility of argument, be rescued from the charge of two-fold idolatry, except on the supposition of the full divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. Roman Catholics, therefore, if, on their own principles, they would be free from the guilt of aggravated idolatry, must strenuously maintain the eternal Godhead of the Son : and, it is remarkable, that,

amidst all their errors, they have never betrayed the least tendency, to waver respecting the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity, or respecting the sacrificial efficacy of our Lord's death and passion. But, however this may be, one indefensible error, at least, was fraught with eventual benefit. The monstrous abuse of indulgences, as carried to its height, by the prodigal rapacity of Leo the tenth, was the first exciting cause of the glorious Reformation.

Of this Reformation, the fairest portion is, by the blessing of God, our providential birth-right. And in this place, and on this occasion, I cannot forego the gratification, of paying an humble tribute of duty and affection, to our venerable parent, the Church of England.

The pious founders of our national Establishment, both deeply pondered, and sincerely loved, a principle, which, in literature, in politics, in morals, and religion, is far above all price; and which should be engraven on the hearts and consciences, of all Christian philosophers, statesmen, and divines; the principle, namely, that TO INNOVATE, IS NOT TO REFORM. They had not attained that improvident recklessness of consequences, which would reject essential good, because accompanied with accidental evil; which would cast away the gold of Christian antiquity, though easily separable from the adscititious dross

of later times. They were not prepared, to desert the adamantine foundation, which was laid by the Apostles and Prophets; or the superstructure of gold, silver, and precious stones, which was raised by the Catholic Bishops and Fathers, merely because some wood, hay, and stubble, had been added by workmen of inferior note. Deeply versed in all knowledge, human and divine, they could not, at once, unlearn all the lessons that were entwined with their dearest recollections, that were associated with their brightest prospects; all that had made their youth, innocent and joyous; all that made their age, venerated and venerable; all that enabled them to look forward with complacency and comfort, to the last great earthly change. Adorers of God's special providence, they could not consign to oblivion, as superfluous and superannuated, those documents of most remote antiquity, that 'precious life-blood of so many master-spirits,' which, amidst the revolutions of ages, had been providentially 'embalmed and treasured up, on purpose to a life beyond life.' (10) They felt, that, as the universal consent of all men, in all ages, is allowed to be the voice of nature, so, the unanimous concurrence of councils, churches, bishops, and fathers, ought to be received as the voice of the Gospel. Therefore, when they came

to reform abuses, they adopted, as their motto, and their principle, that golden decision of the council of Nice, LET ANCIENT USAGES PREVAIL¹.

Such was the spirit, in which our Reformers executed their holy work ; and we enjoy the fruits of their labours ; an uninterrupted succession, from the apostolic age, of bishops, priests, and deacons ; not pensioners on the state, not dependants on the people, but, for the advantage both of state and people, invested with a just gradation of dignities, and protected in their properties and rights ; a ritual, in which the solemnities of religion are performed, to use the words of my great countryman, Mr. Burke, ‘with modest splendour, with unassuming state, with mild majesty, and sober pomp.’ A body of liturgical services, the collected and concentrated spirit of whatever was most valuable in all christian antiquity ; at once, spiritual and rational ; fervent and sober ; philosophical and popular ; simple and profound : an exposition of national faith, which, to be rightly apprehended, and duly appreciated, must be carefully collated with the sacred Scriptures, with the general voice of Christian antiquity, and with the confessions

¹ Εθῇ ἀρχαία κρατεῖτω.

of other reformed communities. On such a comparison, it may be safely affirmed, for it can be abundantly proved, that the articles of the Church of England, are more accurate, and less rigid; more liberal, and less relaxed; more orthodox, and less dogmatic, than those of any other society, at present in existence. And the reason is plain; our reformers were not desirous, either literally to coincide with, or unlimitedly to dissent from, any particular communion, whether that of Geneva, of Augsburg, or of Rome. For it can be established, by a cloud of witnesses, that the sacred Scripture was their text; and the harmony of all Churches in all ages, their great expositor.

Such is the Church of England. Loved and revered, by her own genuine children; respected and admired, by the most judicious members of foreign communions; and often mentioned with honour, by adherents of the Church of Rome. In times of innovation, and unsettlement, it has been her happy allotment, to contend for the faith delivered unto the Saints; to keep whole and undefiled, the confession of a Trinity in Unity; to maintain, at once, the deep foundation of divine grace, and the elevated superstructure of Christian holiness. Seldom without examples of transcendent excellence among her sons; but

ever approving herself the pillar and ground of the truth, the faithful guardian of that precious deposit, that invaluable form of sound words, which, at all times, and even though the great body of laity and clergy were, for a season, to slumber and sleep, may be resorted to, as a rallying point and a standard. Happy, in her original veneration of antiquity; happier still, in that a superintending Providence, has, by a series of remarkable interpositions, preserved uninjured and entire, the great public document of that veneration, I mean our primitive, Catholic, and Apostolic Liturgy.

The truth is, the more narrowly we examine this Liturgy, the more deeply it will excite our admiration. It seems to be an indication, and a pledge, of what our Church is, one day, to accomplish, for the world and for Christianity. And it, assuredly, far exceeds the best services which have hitherto been rendered, by the truest sons of the Church of England. Our great divines of the seventeenth century, the ablest, perhaps, and the most learned, that our Church can boast, have, indeed, conferred an inestimable benefit in their writings. Still, however, they excelled, rather in detail, than in comprehensiveness; rather in elucidating detached portions of Christianity, than in exhibiting the Christian scheme,

as a complete and well-regulated whole. In their several departments, they thought, and reasoned, and poured forth their copious erudition, with admirable effect; but none of them would seem to have possessed a master-principle, a key to the more extended regions of divine truth. They have raised, indeed, from the mines of antiquity, gold, silver, and precious stones, for the service of the sanctuary; but other workmen, more fully acquainted with the plan of the great Architect, will be necessary, to carry the edifice upward, to its full perfection. Meanwhile, it is certain, that, during the last century, and in the commencement of the present, considerable advances have been made. "Many have gone to and fro; and knowledge has been increased." New fields have been opened, in metaphysical divinity, in sound criticism, and in the philosophical study of Christianity, as a progressive scheme. Both the Greek and Hebrew Scriptures, have been diligently collated with the best MSS., and ably edited, both at home and abroad. The German divines, with much indeed, of that daring and licentious spirit, so prevalent abroad, have afforded critical aids to the advanced student in theology, which, if used with caution, may be used with advantage. And it must not be omitted, that both within and without their own immediate

sphere, very remarkable effects have been produced, by those associated religious bodies, which, towards the middle of the last century, arose from within the Established Church. Effects, of a mixed and dubious character; which must be carefully examined, and weighed, by all who would understand the present state of the religious world; and, especially, by all who would desire to comport themselves as true sons of the Church of England.

And assuredly, when we look around on the state of the Christian world, agitated, as it is, by controversies, and divided by strange doctrines: when we look, at the state of religious parties in England, and perceive, that, at home, the example is but too closely followed (11), we must feel that our duty, at all times arduous and important, is, at this day, difficult and delicate in the extreme. I am aware, that you, my brethren, are disposed to view all existing differences of judgment, in a spirit of meekness, moderation, and brotherly love. But we are bound each of us, to act in his own proper sphere; and it were difficult to conjecture, how far, some of us may soon be called, to act with promptness and decision. It is therefore right, that we maturely examine, both the actual condition of things, and the course, which, under possible circumstances,

it may be our duty to pursue, in order, that, if difficulties arise, we may be enabled to meet them neither unprepared, nor dismayed. So far, then, as I may presume to offer an opinion, I would say, — “Let us go to our fathers, and they will show us; to our elders, and they will tell us;” let us have recourse to the great luminaries of our own Church; let us consult the yet more venerable authorities, of the ancient Church at large: let us, next to the sacred Word of God, make these our study: selecting, as our daily food, those great fundamental truths, in which all sound and pious writers, of all churches, and of all ages, consent and are agreed. Let us do thus, and we shall find ourselves on a vantage-ground, from which we shall not readily be moved; let us do thus, and we shall be enabled successfully to oppose all erroneous and strange opinions; all, that bear not the venerable stamp of the universal Church; all, that, on the one hand, border on the extreme of cold and lifeless theory, all, that, on the other hand, would hurry us into enthusiasm, fanaticism, or dogmatical excess.

Let it not, however, be imagined, that I would recommend a wide course, either of polemical study, or of controversial discussion. On the contrary, I am persuaded, that the studies by

which we shall, in the best manner, be fitted to serve others, are those in which it shall be our chief aim to purify our own hearts and minds, by the great truths of religion. And I am equally assured, that the best mode of opposing error, is seldom directly to advert to it; but calmly, and attractively, to exhibit the opposite right and truth. For truth is, in itself, delightful to every unsophisticated mind. It wins its own way. It affects, it warns, it invigorates, it controls, by its own proper and peculiar energy. It needs not elaborate proofs, or subtle argumentation. Let it be proposed, in fulness and simplicity, with clearness and with affection, and the work is done. We shall thus gain the strong hold of every honest understanding; we shall thus win the citadel, of every heart that can be won.

Finally, let us remember, that we belong to that Church, which is "built on the foundation of the prophets and apostles, — Jesus Christ himself being the head corner-stone." And in every season of public difficulty or trial, let us rejoice, in the comfortable assurance, that Christ will be with his Church "alway, even unto the end of the world;" and that no honest wish, no prudent effort, no affectionate earnestness to co-operate with Him, will pass unnoticed or unaided.

Now unto Him, that is able to do exceeding abundantly, above all that we can ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us; unto Him be glory, in the Church, by Jesus Christ, throughout all ages, world without end. AMEN.

NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

(1) Page 120.] Respecting the very early and total cessation of miracles, Bishops Kaye and Blomfield have expressed an opinion, which like every thing that proceeds from those eminent Prelates, is entitled to most respectful consideration; the writer is not, however, exactly prepared to agree with them; and, should his health permit him, he would willingly devote some time and thought, at a future period, to a close investigation of the subject.

(2) Page 123.] Ex iis, quæ obtingunt ecclesiæ: hæc enim operum divinorum theatrum est. Conf. I. Cor. iv. 9.

— Bengel.

Par ce que Dieu fait dans l'Eglise. — Beausobre.

By means of what is done for *the Church*. — Doddridge.

Through the constitution and consummation of *the Church*.

— Macknight.

Hanc suam sapientiam manifestavit Deus *per ecclesiam*, per providentiam suam in gubernanda et propaganda ecclesia; ex hac enim angeli sapientiam divinam intelligunt, sicuti nos homines eam intelligimus, cognoscendis et spectandis fatis et cursu rerum omnium. — Rosenmüller Schol.

Per fata religionis. — Iaspis. Versio Lat. tom. i. p. 305. Lips. 1821.

Angelis sane affatim materiæ præbetur, Deum sapientissimum admirandi et concelebrandi, quod per tot sæculorum decursus hominibus semper prospexerit, ac tandem per Christum ab omni parte optime iis consuluerit; quanta

quoque cum sapientia in gubernanda ecclesia Christiana versatus fuerit. — Id. not.

Sapientiam hanc *multiformem* nollem restringi ad Judæorum et Gentium sub uno capite conjunctionem, sed extendi velim ad totam œconomiam, tam redemptionis humanæ per Christum, quàm gubernationis ecclesiæ, variis ipsius ætatibus et periodis a mundi principio. Miranda certe est Dei providentia, sive quòd peccatum et permisit, et ad gloriam suam direxit; sive quòd suos, per media in speciem contraria, ad felicitatem perduxit, ut Josephum, Davidem, Paulum, &c. sive mirabilem illam spectes necessitatis, contingentiaque, et libertatis concursum; sive quòd per instrumenta vilia res magnas peregit; sive (quod locum hunc propriùs attingit) expendas varios ecclesiæ vultus, formasque externas, una semper manente pietatis cultusque divini substantia, ante legem, sub lege, sub gratiâ, variosque voluntatem divinam patefaciendi modos, variasque lucis mensuras. — Bodius, ap. Poli Synops. Crit. in loc.

(3) Page 124.] Quia insurgunt fluctus, potest turbari navicula; sed quia Christus orat, non potest mergi. — S. Augustin.

(4) Page 125.] ‘Even the false prophets, the false teachers, the false miracles, the heresies, dissensions, schisms, among Christians, although seen through the telescope of infidel malice, as so many dark spots on the bright face of Christianity, do high honour, nevertheless, to its Author, who foretold them all, and by that means, converted these instruments and efforts of his enemy into so many proofs of his own wisdom and truth, for the full satisfaction of such as shall candidly inquire into the merits of his religion.’ — Skelton’s Works, vol. i. p. 212. edit. Lond. 1824.

(5) Page 127.] Retinet tamen, licet tanto lapsu attonita, mens umbram aliquam, et confusas veluti species amissi boni,

et *cognati semina cæli*.—Leighton. Prælect. p. 9. edit. Cantabrig. 1828.

Non usque adeo in anima humana imago Dei terrenorum affectuum labe detrita est, ut nulla in ea velut lineamenta extrema remanserint.—S. August. Lib. de Spir. et Lit. cap. xxviii. tom. x. p. iii. edit. Bened.

Hujusmodi homines [gentes scil.] ipsi sibi sunt lex, et scriptum opus legis habent in cordibus suis, id est, non omni modo deletum est, quod ibi per imaginem Dei cum crearentur impressum est.—Id. ib.

(6) Page 128.] ‘The proportion of good, infinitely surpasses that of evil, in the universe; and good is given for its own sake, but evil never sent, unless as a means productive of some greater good. We may therefore consider evil, as a tax imposed for the support and exigencies of God’s government; and we may rest assured, that no more is levied, than will be applied to the advantage of the great community.’—Search’s *Light of Nature*, vol. iii. p. 252.

(7) Page 129.] ‘Let a rational man now consider, first, the rapid propagation of Christianity, which, in less than half a century, had spread itself through all parts of the Roman empire; had penetrated into the East Indies, Ethiopia, Italy, Spain, Gaul, and Scythia; and, in the space of two hundred years, had converted such numbers, in all ranks and conditions of men, that its apologists could boldly tell the emperors, they could not suppress Christianity without subverting their own power. Secondly, let him consider, that, as fast as this religion advanced, so fast, superstition, idolatry, and wickedness, declined, particularly in the Roman empire, at that time remarkably prone, through infinite wealth, and insolence of power, to universal corruption. And, then, let him reflect a little, by what instruments it made this prodigious progress, and wrought these glorious effects. Were its preachers all profound philosophers? No;

there were few among them who knew more than barely how to read and write. Were they all eloquent orators? No; except St. Paul, there were none of them, for a long time, who understood more of elocution, than the plainest tradesman who heard them. Were they all profound politicians? No; of all men they were the simplest, the most artless, the most destitute of address and skill in managing worldly affairs. What then? Did they proselyte the world, like Mahomet, by the sword, by power, and by the expectation of spoil and plunder? No; they were among the very lowest and weakest of the people. The sword was so far from being with them, that, for three hundred years, it was almost continually employed against them; while they opposed it with nothing but patience and resignation. The empire found itself Christian, almost as soon as it ceased to persecute Christianity.'—Skelton, vol. i. pp. 212, 213.

(8) Page 131.] See some just and sensible observations, by Archbishop Secker, Sermon xxiii. vol. i. pp. 321—323. edit. Dublin.

(9) Page 132.] *Ex hæreticis asserta est doctrina Catholica; et ex his qui male sentiunt, probati sunt qui bene sentiunt. Multa enim latebant in Scripturis; et cum præcisi essent hæretici, quæstionibus agitaverunt ecclesiam Dei: aperta sunt quæ latebant, et intellecta est voluntas Dei.*

Multi qui optime possent Scripturas dignoscere et pertractare, latebant in populo Dei; nec asserebant solutionem quæstionum difficilium cum calumniator nullus instaret. Numquid enim perfecte de Trinitate tractatum est, antequam oblatrarent Ariani? Numquid perfecte de pœnitentia tractatum est, antequam obsisterent Novatiani? Sic non perfecte de baptismo tractatum est, antequam contradicerent foris positi rebaptizatores; nec de ipsa unitate Christi enucleate dicta erant, quæ dicta sunt, nisi postea quam separatio illa urgere cœpit patres infimos, ut jam illi qui

noverant hæc tractare et dissolvere, ne perirent infirmi sollicitati quæstionibus impiorum, sermonibus et disputationibus suis obscura legis in publicum deducerent.—S. August. in Psalm. liv. 22. col. 513. ed. Bened.

Multa quippe ad fidem Catholicam pertinentia, dum hæreticorum callida inquietudine exagitantur, ut adversus eos defendi possint, et considerantur diligentius, et intelliguntur clarius, et instantius prædicantur.—S. August. de Civit. Dei, xvi. 2.

Hæreses adversus nomen Christi, sub velamento tamen nominis Christi, ad exercendam doctrinam sanctæ religionis, sicut prænuntiatae sunt pullulant.—Id. ad Volusian. ep. cxxxvii. op. tom. ii. col. 409. ed. Ben.

(10) Page 136.] Milton. Speech for the Liberty of unlicensed Printing. — Works, vol. i. p. 290. ed. 8vo. Lond. 1806.

(11) Page 141.] ‘Some things, in their own quality, are more easy, and near to us, and more within the reach of sense; and therefore, as corporeal things, because of their sensibility and nearness, do possess the minds of carnal men, instead of things spiritual and unseen; even so, Paul, and Apollos, and Cephas, this good preacher, and that good book, and this opinion, and that church-society, and this or that ordinance, do possess the minds of the more carnal, narrow sort of Christians; instead of the harmony of Christian truth, and holy duty.’—Baxter’s Life of Faith, Works, vol. iii. p. 622.

DISCOURSE VIII. *

SAINT LUKE xv. 10.

THERE IS JOY IN THE PRESENCE OF THE ANGELS OF GOD,
OVER ONE SINNER THAT REPENTETH.

It has been often observed, that our most important study, is the knowledge of ourselves; and we admit it, with the exception of one only, but that an infinitely important study, the knowledge of our God. To exist is little, except we exist happily; and it is impossible to exist happily, without knowing and loving Him, in whom "we live, and move, and have our being." He has given us mental and spiritual capacities, which He alone can occupy, and fill. He has made us for himself; and has so constituted our souls, that, out of Him, they cannot find their rest. Is it possible, then, to conceive

* Preached for the Lock Penitentiary, in Saint Peter's Church, Dublin, April 12, 1809.

a question, that more deeply involves our hopes, and fears, and highest interests, than the grand question, What is God? This inquiry, the wisest heathens owned themselves unable to pursue. But we, my brethren, are furnished, by divine revelation, with an answer, which proves its own heavenly origin. We are told, by that disciple whom Jesus loved, who had the nearest access to the heart of his Lord, who most deeply imbibed the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth, that "God is love."

Love is ever active, ever communicative, ever bountiful; when, therefore, we are instructed that "God is love," we are assured, that it is his very essence, to diffuse and heighten happiness; and that, for this purpose, He is continually pouring fresh influences of holiness and truth, through the boundless sphere of his creation; that it is the inherent tendency of his nature, to multiply living images of his own perfections; to advance the different orders of his creatures, in wisdom, purity, and love; to subdue, by stronger energies of mercy, those who are unhappily averted from the gentle influences, which "distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb;" so far as may consist with the freedom of intellectual agency, to produce

light from darkness, order from confusion, good from evil; and, in every instance, finally to effect the greatest possible triumph of righteousness, and peace, and joy.

This is the central truth of religion: given us, like the sun in the firmament, to enlighten our path, and cheer our hearts. But its brightness is too dazzling, to be long contemplated by human eyes; we cannot, for any continuance, thus “see God and live.” Therefore, in condescension to the weakness of our present state, it has pleased the gracious Father of our spirits, to shine by reflection, in all his works; and to guide us, by his revealed word, to those objects, which most happily exhibit the glories of his invisible perfections. Of this nature precisely, is the instruction conveyed in our text. He who “knew what was in man,” felt, that, in this stage of our being, we are incapable of directly viewing the fulness of divine benignity. And therefore, to aid us in the exercise of contemplation, he discloses the transports which are felt, even at the least extended exercises of God’s love, by the glorious beings who surround his throne; by those “angels of his, that excel in strength, that fulfil his commandment, and hearken unto the voice of his words.”—“There

is joy, in the presence of the angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth."

But it was not to create a mere speculative admiration, that this animating truth was originally pronounced. Nor is it with such a view, that it has been selected as the subject of this discourse. It is intended, to speak to our hearts, and influence our lives; it is meant, to unite us, in one common feeling, with those angels, that "do always behold the face of our Father, which is in heaven:" and it authorizes us to hope, that, by this happy identity of spirit, the Church below, will more and more anticipate its perfect union, with the Church above.

That human society, is even now, in progress towards this blessed consummation, we have every encouragement to believe. And the very purpose, for which we are this day assembled, is, in itself, a prognostic of better days to come.

For, assuredly, it implies a growing desire to co-operate with Him, whose delight it was on earth, and whose joy it is, in his heavenly kingdom, "to seek and to save that which was lost." I shall not, then, apologize, for leading you to contemplate what is felt by angels, at the conversion and repentance of a single sinner. It is a motive to mercy, which has the highest of all sanctions. It was urged, by Him, who was

the eternal wisdom of the Father. And, if attentively considered, it cannot fail to impress itself on our understanding and on our hearts. "There is joy, in the presence of the angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth." Why, my brethren? Because the angels of God are benevolent; because they are the elder sons of Him, who "is loving unto every man, whose tender mercies are over all his works." As the pure and uncorrupted offspring of that Being, who is love, they richly inherit his gracious nature. It is their joy, to contemplate the works of his condescending goodness. It is their ambition, to participate in that compassion for the weak, that tenderness towards the guilty, that complacency in the truly penitent, which render the infinite, eternal Godhead, dearer and more glorious, even to those who are within the sphere of his highest and happiest influences. These blessed spirits, then, are more than benevolent; they are affectionate. They regard us, as younger brothers of the same great family; as the prodigals, who have strayed from their father's house; whose reception can never be a cause of murmuring to them; whose return they long for, and are waiting to hail, with songs of gratulation, like that which ushered in our Saviour's advent; "Glory to God in the

highest; and, on earth, peace, good-will towards men!"

Nor is this joy the result of benevolence alone. It is the joy of wisdom, of sagacity, I had almost said, of boundless comprehension. Angels triumph at a case of individual repentance, because their knowledge of God's entire system, heightens their value for each single part. Because they resemble Him, who numbers the very hairs of our heads, while his providence embraces worlds, and his wisdom enlightens intelligences, far above the reach of human thought. They can grasp, without effort, what is vast; and act with intensity, upon what is minute. In their view, no work of omnipotence is insignificant; but a living soul is of inestimable price, because its destinies never terminate in itself; and because, by their power of discerning remote consequences, and final results, they may perceive the salvation of each single soul, involving the salvation of thousands. For example; in the converted persecutor Saul, they, doubtless, beheld the future glory of the Church; the Apostle, who was to labour more abundantly than all; the fervent, zealous, heaven-instructed teacher, for whose ministry, millions of saints will, for ever, bless the Father of lights. Nor, let it be objected, that this is

a special case, a departure from the ordinary course of providence. For, though we thankfully acknowledge, that Saint Paul was, indeed, "a chosen vessel," yet, it is not for us, to limit, or define, the precious results, which angels may discern, in the repentance of the humblest sinner. In the kingdoms of this world, the most important revolutions may be traced to the most insignificant causes. And so, in God's universal empire, the salvation of a spirit, that has passed unnoticed from time into eternity, may be pregnant with events, which fill angelic minds with astonishment, and pious admiration.

Such, my brethren, is the tender, yet enlightened benevolence of angels. Endued with capacities, compared with which, our best powers are weaker than infant imbecility, they await, with humble submission, the will of the all-wise Disposer. His schemes they perceive to be all simple, gradual, but inexpressibly grand; originating, frequently, from the least possible causes, and terminating, always, in the greatest possible effects. They know the value of each movement, however small; and it is their highest honour to aid its progress. But they strictly confine themselves to their duty; and, instead of continually looking for great and stupendous results, they patiently expect the happiest con-

sequences, from events, which mortals regard with coldness and neglect. They saw the earth peopled, at first, from a single Adam; they saw the renewed earth, emerging from a watery waste, repopled from a single Noah; they see the Church itself, that people, from whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, emanating from a single Abraham; and, in correspondence with these indications of a great providential system, "There is joy, in the presence of the angels of God, over a single sinner that repenteth."

And, assuredly, my brethren, the nearer we approach the nature of these glorious beings, the more will we imitate their tranquil, unobtrusive, wise benevolence. We shall be content, to proceed with patient steadiness, from small to great; we shall suspect that dazzling magnitude of first appearance, whose premature promises almost invariably terminate in eventual disappointment; and we shall prefer that unassuming order of nature, which advances through the noiseless process of vegetation, to the rich maturity of an abundant harvest.

But, into the joy of angels, over one repentant sinner, there enters a principle far more tender than benevolence; far sublimer, than the utmost reach of intellect. This principle is, the

supreme love, of the Supreme Excellence. The affections of these happy beings are, then only, suitably exercised, and their intellect is, then only, adequately employed, when God is the object of their adoring contemplation. And it cannot be questioned, that the conversion of a single sinner, presents an aspect of Deity, which, without such an intervention, angels never could behold.

There are mysteries, we read, which angels desire to look into; and these, be it observed, are mysteries of mercy. Of God's other perfections, they have, doubtless, a deep experimental knowledge. But this divinest attribute, they must learn from his dealings with some race of lapsed intelligences. Sinless themselves, we must suppose them personally unacquainted with the long-suffering, the placability, the restoring grace of the Almighty. But these are all combined, they are distinctly and harmoniously exemplified, in the return and reception of each awakened prodigal. Angels then behold the adorable attributes of Godhead, in a new, and most endearing light. They see *love*, which the collective adoration of the universe could not adequately return, exerted in overcoming the hatred of a rebellious creature; they see *wisdom*, "the brightness of the everlasting light, that

pure influence from the glory of the Almighty," chasing away the darkness of a degraded and polluted soul; they see *power*, which could create new worlds, resting, as it were, till the patience of love, and the long-suffering of wisdom, produce their perfect work, in the world which already is; they see *majesty*, in whose presence the highest seraphim veil their faces, pleading, expostulating, striving, with a being that might truly say to corruption, "Thou art my father; to the worm, thou art my mother and sister;" and, in this union of infinite humility with inconceivable greatness, they view a mystery, into which, the more they penetrate, the more they must be filled with wonder, joy, and grateful adoration.

With such emotions, most eminently, they beheld the blessed Son of God on earth, more glorious, when He "took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses," than when He called the worlds into being. The miracles which attested his divine commission to frail and finite man, were, probably, no miracles to angels. When He stilled the tempest, and walked upon the waves; when He commanded the dead to rise; when He afforded, at his transfiguration, a glimpse of that glorified body, with which He afterwards ascended into heaven,—He suspended the facul-

ties of mortals in amazement. But, may we not, with humility and reverence, conjecture, that angels felt a deeper awe, and a far more exceeding delight, when He performed other and far greater miracles,—miracles of mercy, of condescension, of humiliation? His wise and gracious intercourse with publicans and sinners, gently, yet powerfully, drawing them to happiness, to heaven, to God; his disclosure of a profoundly spiritual doctrine, to the woman of Samaria, whose worship was erroneous, whose life was criminal, but whose heart, He knew, could be touched, whose soul, He saw, could yet be saved; his inexpressible tenderness to her, who washed his feet with tears, forgetting her past delinquency, in the lively evidences of her new-born faith and love, restoring her to modest self-estimation, and dismissing her in purity and peace; his heart-searching answer, to the accusers of that other unfortunate woman, which enabled Him to show mercy, without lowering the standard of morals, and to recall a sinner to virtue, by the most dignified and affecting display of its native loveliness,—these acts of the incarnate God, were seen of angels; and could they be seen without exceeding joy? Could they fail to heighten, to enhance, and to endear, the previous conviction, that “God is

love?" But, my brethren, our Lord Jesus Christ is "the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever;" those special acts of his, which are registered in the Gospel, are but the index of his present dealings with the children of men. He is now, as really, and, to angelic apprehensions, as visibly operative, in the conversion of each returning sinner, as when he lived upon earth. He is exercising, in his mediatorial kingdom, the same compassion, the same tenderness, the same mild persuasion, the same generous oblivion where repentance is sincere, the same gracious allowance where faith is weak, the same unremitting care to "stablish, strengthen, settle," all that will unreservedly yield themselves to his blessed attractions, and seek, by continual prayer, for his ever-present, all sufficient aid. If angels, then, rejoice, they most rejoice, at the Messiah's highest triumphs; they rejoice at the efficacy of divine grace; they rejoice, at the omnipotence of heavenly love; "There is joy, in the presence of the angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth!"

For, what is the repentance of a sinner? It is an effect of divine wisdom and goodness, in some respects, more glorious than the creation of an archangel. In creation, God speaks that He may be obeyed; in this deeper, and more

endearing process, He "waiteth that He may be gracious." And how dear this object is to Almighty God himself, we may form some conception, from our Lord's exquisite parable of the prodigal son. For, who is that Father, who, "while his son was yet a great way off, saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him?" It is Christ's own picture of the Eternal Father; with this difference, only, that as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are his thoughts above the kindest of man's thoughts, and his ways, above our ways. Yes; there are features in the divine reality, to which no imagery drawn from human life can do justice. The Father of mercies, not only looks for the return of his prodigals, but his gracious eye watches over them, in that far country to which they have withdrawn. He takes care of them, when they are lost to themselves. From day to day, from year to year, he meets perverseness, with patience; He pursues the straying spirit, through its wanderings; He converts what erring mortals call chance, into opportune correction, and saving discipline; he proceeds, inwardly and spiritually, in that very course, which our Lord outwardly and substantially exemplified. And with what end, my brethren? Our Saviour's words best make known the heavenly estimate: "This my

son was dead, and is alive again ; was lost, and is found !”

Mankind has valued, and justly valued, those minds, which have been most inquisitive about the secret processes of nature, and whose experiments have best illustrated the phenomena of the physical world. But what is there, in the whole inanimate creation, that can bear comparison with that plan of infinite love, which would avert the misery, and insure the happiness, of beings that can never die ? Could a whole universe of unintelligent matter, however organized, be fairly placed in the scale with a single soul, destined, by the laws of our being, to an eternity of bliss or woe ? What process is there, of art or nature, which should interest us like that, by which a spirit, that awaits this awful alternative, is transmuted, from the likeness of Satan, to the image of God ; is transferred from the depth of infinite peril, to an eminence of holy hope ? Would to God, my brethren, that we, all of us, possessed a deeper sense of the misery and the danger ! We could, then, form a more adequate idea, how precious are the first effectual movements, towards moral purity, and everlasting joy. Angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, can alone fully comprehend the calamity ; they alone, therefore, are competent justly to appreciate the

in a joy that is theirs. This point we are assured of by the fact that in each individual instance of salvation they mark the progress, with an increase of their knowledge and their goodness. And we can best and happiest frames of mind might say we understand the feelings excited in the holy angels by the first clear discovery of sin, and the first true penitence: of the darkness of sin, leading to the dawn of deliverance from the dark of depravity and shamefulness, surrounded by the earliest but genuine influences of that spiritual life, which is called with Christ in God.

When our Divine Master wished most briefly and emphatically to describe the final blessedness of the just he said in those words—"For they shall be equal unto the angels of God which are in heaven." What greater blessing than what will our happiness, can we on this earth expect, in that participation of that angelic life: that a community of feeling with those our future associates: that a participation in their joy, not merely over our, but over *many* sinners that are brought into repentance! My brethren, a still higher privilege awaits us: even that we should become the authors of joy in heaven: that we should minister unto angels fresh causes of delight, new occasions of holy

exultation. What services these gracious beings perform for the inhabitants of this lower world, we can neither determine, nor investigate; but of this we are assured, that, in reclaiming sinners to himself, the Almighty almost invariably employs the agency of man; we are invited, then, to be workers together with God; we are called, to be the followers of Christ, in his most endearing office of redemption; we are, this day, assembled, in this holy place, as the representatives of Him, who "came to seek, and to save, that which was lost."

Amidst the gloriously diffusive range of public beneficence, if there be one institution, which towers above the rest, in usefulness, in mercy, and in exact conformity to the principles of our holy religion, it is the institution which you are assembled, this day, to support. To enlarge on this assertion, would be to retrace all that I have been endeavouring to impress; for it may be safely said, that every truth which flows from the text, bears upon this particular subject, as a most forcible motive; and finds, in this branch of charity, its most perfect exemplification.

In reviewing the situation, from which these once unhappy females have been relieved, I will not wound your feelings, by detailing horrors, which the agents of charity must witness, but

by which ears prompt to charity, need not be afflicted. Suffice it to say, that the lowest conceivable depth of misery, is that, from which your merciful hands are extended, to raise those, who partake with you of the same nature, who are the offspring of the same God, the purchase of the same redemption. If motives are to be added, they forcibly present themselves; the earnestness, with which those victims of misfortune intreat admission; the patience, and perseverance, with which they wait for this ministration of mercy: and that, frequently, in a situation, which exceeds in calamity every other imaginable situation;—these are circumstances, which cannot but powerfully affect hearts, that have never yet been insensible to the claims of humanity.

On such scenes, it is not my purpose to dwell. Far more grateful is the office, of bearing testimony, as, from the deepest conviction of my judgment, I do bear the most unqualified testimony, to the internal economy of this Institution; cleanliness, decency, and regularity, pervade every part of it; the inmates are distinguished, by a patient submission to control, a prompt alacrity in business, and a degree of mutual kindness and good-will, which would be remarkable in any society of equal numbers; but which, in females whose former habits were

so deplorably the reverse, is truly astonishing. Such as were ignorant of their very letters, at the time of their admission, have since, by the voluntary and laborious dedication of their few leisure hours, qualified themselves to read the sacred Scriptures. The happiest consequences are, even now, visible; and we may confidently predict still increasing effects, when these penitents (for they truly deserve the name), shall be restored to society, deeply impressed with the principles, and influenced by the spirit, of our holy religion. Nor is this mere theory. There is most solid, and satisfactory evidence, which we can, at any time, produce. Numbers, who have been restored to their families, or established in respectable services, not only conduct themselves in the most exemplary manner, but maintain a regular intercourse, personally, and by letter, with the truly respectable matron of the Institution.

And now, my brethren, there remains but this single consideration. We are told by the Apostle, that "the effectual fervent prayer, of a righteous man, availèth much;" and it is no less certain, that the effectual fervent prayer of a converted prodigal availèth much. There is an energy, a tenderness, a depth of feeling, in her devotions, which render them peculiarly acceptable to the

throne of grace. We learn, from our blessed Lord, that "she loveth much, to whom much hath been forgiven;" and who does not know, that love is the very soul of all true devotion? But if ever the prayers of such a penitent ascend with special warmth, it is when she addresses God, in behalf of her benefactors; to whom she is indebted for more than life; through whose bounty it is that she has been snatched from perdition; through whose benignity she has free access to the Father of spirits. And who is there among us, that has not need of mercy? Who is there among us, that would not rejoice, to have his name associated in such prayers, with the good, and gracious, and bountiful of the earth? Who is there, whose heart would not bound within him, if he were given to hear the last aspirations of a soul, everlastingly rescued, by the intervention of his beneficence, — of a mortal, ready to be clothed by immortality, — offered up in his favour to that God, before whom she is about to stand, and in whom she will have her perfect consummation and bliss, throughout eternal ages? My brethren, this is what you are called to this day. May the Inspirer of every merciful disposition, and the Perfecter of every good work, so influence your minds, so rule in your hearts, so animate you with his own blessed Spirit, that

sinner may be reclaimed from the error of their way; that there may be joy in the presence of the angels of God; that your names may be written in the book of God's remembrance; and, in that day, when He shall make up his jewels, that you may be the acknowledged children of the Lord of Hosts! Amen.

DISCOURSE IX.¹

SAINT LUKE xix. 10.

FOR THE SON OF MAN IS COME TO SEEK, AND TO SAVE THAT
WHICH WAS LOST.

THESE words have a special claim on our attention, at this most holy season ². They were pronounced by our gracious Redeemer, in his last journey to Jerusalem, a very few days before his death upon the cross. In common with every recorded utterance of his feeling at that most interesting period, they bear the impress of one great master sentiment; that He was about to die, and, by dying, to redeem that world, which He made. But his heart, though centrally occupied with this great concern, was alive to all the claims of humanity. His tenderness, his condescension, his affability, were then, if possible, more benignantly operative than at any former period of

¹ Preached for the Magdalen Asylum, Dublin, 1811.

² Lent.

his life. If he foretold, or alluded to, his own impending sorrow, it was, invariably, for the instruction, consolation, or improvement of his apostles. If he met the unfortunate, he pitied them; the ignorant, he taught them; the blind, he gave them sight. He received every mark of affectionate attention, with the most touching sensibility. The very alacrity of his movement, as he walked toward Jerusalem, incidentally noticed by one evangelist, indicated the calm, collected, firmness of his soul; and the occurrence which gave rise to the words of our text, is peculiarly deserving of a more detailed examination.

As our Lord was on his progress through the city of Jericho, great multitudes followed; attracted, both, by the splendour of his miracles, and by the delusive hope, that the meek and lowly Jesus, would triumphantly appear, at the approaching passover, as their victorious, temporal Messiah. One inhabitant, in particular, a rich man, a chief officer of the customs, long devoted to the acquisition of wealth, and not always exactly scrupulous in the means of acquisition, very naturally partook in the prevailing spirit of curiosity: "He sought to see Jesus, who he was." Impeded by the crowd, for he was little of stature, his ingenuity devised the means of safely gratifying his wishes; he ran

before the procession, climbed into a sycamore-tree, and there awaited the arrival of the great Prophet. But a strange and wonderful revolution was at hand. For "when Jesus came to the place, he looked up." The majesty of our Lord's person, the more than human expression of his countenance, but, especially, the ineffable, and healing virtue of his look, doubtless affected the astonished publican, with an emotion, such as he had never felt before; and, in one moment, effaced the accumulated iniquity of years. "And Jesus saw him:" He saw the reality of his conversion, the sincerity of his repentance, the integrity of his altered purpose. "And said unto him, Zaccheus, make haste and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house:" thus, manifesting his acquaintance, both with the name, and spirit, of his distinguished convert; and thus, too, indicating the value of a modest, inobtrusive disposition; for, it has been well observed, that our Lord never came an uninvited guest, except to him whose modesty forbade an invitation. The feelings of Zaccheus are rather to be imagined, than expressed. And that imagination must be cold, and those affections must be spiritless, which would demand more powerful excitement, than the few and simple words of the sacred historian; who tells us, that

“Zaccheus made haste, and came down, and received Him joyfully.” Far different were the sensations of the multitude: severe to others, indulgent to themselves; proud of their own imaginary rectitude, inexorable to the frailties of a weaker brother, they indignantly murmured, saying, “He is gone to be a guest with a man, that is a sinner.” But divine goodness, like divine wisdom, is justified of her children. This once devoted worshipper of Mammon, stood forth, and testified a real change of mind, by the prompt, immediate, unconditional transfer of half his goods to the poor; and by still more unequivocal evidence, for many find it easier, to be generous than just, by a fourfold restitution, for every injury and wrong, of which he had been guilty¹. Money was no longer the idol of his heart; God had regained the empire of his affections: and his bounty was acceptable unto God, and his transgressions were cancelled by the Searcher of hearts: for “Jesus said unto him, This day, is salvation come to this house; for the Son of man is come, to seek and to save that which was lost.”

¹ It has been observed, that, if more than an eighth part of Zaccheus's wealth had been unjustly acquired, he must, after having given half of what he now possessed to the poor, have been unable to make such restitution, even though he had stripped himself of all his possessions.—See Abp. Tillotson, iii. 83.

In this gracious transaction, it is the most prominent, and not the least instructive feature, that, while our blessed Lord was about to accomplish the redemption of a world, and while his heart was oppressed by the near approach of sorrows above all human sorrow, He spontaneously devoted his time, his thought, and his affectionate solicitude, to the spiritual welfare of one repentant publican; confirming his new-born faith, and cherishing the first dawn of his efficient virtue. But this is only a brief exemplification, of his whole conduct while on earth, and of his present merciful dealings with the children of men. For then, and now, during the short period of his ministry as a servant, and through the boundless extent of his dominion as Lord and Governor of all things, it was, and it is, alike his unchangeable prerogative, to consult the good of the whole, without neglecting the welfare of any part; to promote, indeed, the most comprehensive interests of the world, and the Church; but to pursue the wanderings, to invite the return, and, wherever his gracious call is obeyed, to effect the restoration, of the humblest individual sinner.

In the collective sense, and on the grander scale, it is the great truth of our religion, that the everlasting Son of the Father, dedicated Him-

self, by a course of unexampled humiliation, to seek, and to save, the lost and ruined race of man. To seek it, by a long course of preparatory movements, through the ministration of angels, of patriarchs, of priests, and prophets; to save it, by his blessed incarnation, his matchless life, and his infinitely meritorious death. No sooner was his appointed humiliation finished, as the Son of man, than the glory of his prophetic empire began to dawn, as the Lord and Governor of all created things. A wider and more extended economy commenced; of providential arrangements, of gracious influences, of progressive, and cumulative dispensations; all digested, distributed, and over-ruled, by the victorious Messiah; for the gradual enlargement and edification, for the final accomplishment and perfection, of his universal Church: "all power," said He to his apostles, immediately before his ascension, "all power is given unto me, in heaven and in earth; and lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world." These words are a brief summary of all the prophecies in the New Testament; and, from the general tenour of those prophecies, compared with the transactions of ages, past and present, we may venture to propose this imperfect outline of interpretation: that, by the all-controlling, and

uncontrollable power of Christ, events great and small, prosperous and adverse, moral and political, in all nations of the earth, in all periods of time ; change of manners, progress of opinions, advancement or decline of arts and sciences, the incursions of barbarism, the devastation of kingdoms, the subversion of empires, the alternate subjugation and enfranchisement of the mind and spirit of man ; persecutions, heresies, establishments, sects, divisions, disputations ; the whole fate and fortunes, of the world at large, and of the Church, whether in its distinct capacity, or as united with the world,—that, in the midst of seeming irregularity and confusion, all these, have been, and shall be adjusted, regulated, and disposed, with unspeakable wisdom, and overflowing goodness ; in every stage of the divine procedure, converging, slowly indeed, but with a sure and certain tendency, to that blessed consummation, when the will of our heavenly Father shall be done upon the earth, even as it is in heaven ; when the world and the Church, shall be cemented into one glorious body, united in heart and soul, in belief and practice, in hope and heavenly enjoyment ; no division, no dissension, no competition of interest, no diversity of object, but all, in peace, and harmony, and love, united under Christ as their head, and,

from Him, deriving continual infusions of wisdom, and knowledge, and joy ; a holy people, a peculiar priesthood, a royal generation, meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, and ready to be presented, pure and spotless, before the throne of God, and of the Lamb.

The very existence of a scheme, so vast in its range, and so glorious in its termination, presupposes, in every, the least point of the detail, a continued exercise of goodness, wisdom, and power. For no great and consistent result, was ever yet produced, in the whole, or in part, by a fortuitous concourse of materials. In all the nobler works of man, the sublimity and beauty of the general effect, are, invariably, proportional to the fitness and harmonic distribution of each particular member. Much more, in the wonderful works of God ; for here alone, we can turn, with full complacency, from the vast to the minute ; from overwhelming grandeur, to exquisite contrivance. Our mind is elevated, and our heart is cheered, by the glory of a summer-noon ; but what miracles will the least ray of that light disclose to the philosophic eye ? We are lost in admiration and delight, after toiling to the summit of a bleak mountain, when extended plains, luxuriant valleys, and the wide ocean, burst at once upon our view ; but, even

at such a time, and in such a scene, a religious and well-disciplined imagination, would love to trace the finger of Omnipotence, in the simplest flower of the heath, which blooms at our feet. And if God so clothe the grass of the field, shall He not, much more, supply the spiritual wants, of the weakest, the most humble, the most dejected of his children? Surely, amidst the most magnificent of his arrangements, "He will not despise the sighing of a contrite heart, nor the desire of such as be sorrowful;" surely, in the very constitution of our nature, He hath Himself implanted an argument of mercy and compassion, for "He knoweth whereof we are made, He remembereth that we are but dust." Yes, my brethren; our good and gracious God, deplores the wanderings, and longeth for the return, of every sheep that hath wandered from his fold. "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth:" and repentance, and salvation, are made possible to every sinner; for "the Son of man is come to seek, and to save, that which was lost."

These words need little commentary, in this abode of penitence and prayer. For, the victorious grace of our Redeemer, is here, at once, most practically exemplified, and most cautiously guarded. The directors of this Institution, after

the measure of their ability, have ever been solicitous, to seek, and to save, that which was lost; but, in no instance, would they place the sincerest penitence, in the most remote degree of competition with unblemished purity. From this pulpit, therefore, it were needless to proclaim, that innocence is better than repentance. But, if it were expedient to prove, what none here present will be likely to deny, the inmates of this Asylum could afford most unimpeachable evidence; for they once were innocent. Yes, my brethren: could the secrets of this house be revealed; could the hearts of these recovered wanderers be laid open to your view; could you interrogate the disembodied minds of many more, whom the invisible world now shields from all human obloquy; who were here, first awakened to the horrors of their lost condition; here, first encouraged to raise a supplicating look towards heaven; here, first emboldened to address their God in prayer; and here, finally prepared, to meet that God, in the regions of eternity;—could you read their unutterable language, and hear, within the secrecy of your souls, the warning voice of their expressive silence, you would then, assuredly, leave this house of mercy, with a profound, and awful estimate, of vice and virtue; of sin and holiness; of what it is to be

lost, and what it is to be saved. At such a disclosure, levity would grow serious; jocularly would suspend its unhallowed merriment; and profligacy, itself, would feel the burning blush of shame. No indiscretion, would be then accounted venial; no declension, of slight, and trivial import. The most thoughtless, would then be compelled to know, and the most insensible to feel, what an exceeding weight of sorrow, is treasured up in the first, and smallest declension, from the narrow way; what complicated entanglements oppose every painful effort at return; with how many pangs, and with what bitter tribulation, it is, that the repenting spirit can, in any measure, be restored to hope, and self-respect, and confidence towards God. But a warning yet more solemn, is behind. For, of the many that wander from the fold, how few return to the good Shepherd? How few will even permit themselves to hear his mild and comfortable voice? And when any do return, what cares, what pains, what continued vigilance, what unintermitting assiduity, are indispensable, to maintain their perseverance to the end? By the blessing of God, on the means here adopted, to cherish, to retain, and to improve his powerful grace, this Institution has, indeed, been eminently successful; but even

within these walls, (it must not be concealed, my brethren,) even within these consecrated walls, there have been recorded a few examples of remorseless inflexibility. They were banished, painfully, solemnly, but inevitably, banished from this sanctuary; they are, long since, gone to their account; unless, perhaps, one and another be still increasing the measure of their iniquity; still scattering degradation and abandonment, throughout the community; still "treasuring up wrath, against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." Oh, may all that remain, within the shelter of these walls, be continually mindful of that day, when the books of eternal judgment shall be opened, and the conscience of every accountable being shall be most thoroughly awakened; and every thought, word, and deed, of this life, shall pass in terrible review; and every aggravation, mercy, chastisement, and warning; every good suggestion of the Holy Spirit, every secret whisper of some better principle within, every stifled emotion of penitential sorrow, every unrighteous act of wilful perseverance, shall be proclaimed, before an assembled universe, and registered, in characters that will not fade; and sentence shall be pronounced; and the words of that sentence shall be ratified,

and recorded, never to be cancelled, never to be repealed; irrevocable, immutable, so long as there shall exist a Heaven, a Hell, an Eternity, and a God!

These assuredly, are truths of no limited importance; of no partial application. We are, every one of us, most intimately concerned; we must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ; we must, each individually, participate in that great account, which all flesh, in the last great day, must render to the God of all spirits. To prepare, for that account, and for that day, should be the present, instant, perpetual business of our lives; to prepare wisely and effectually, should, in all reason, be the first object of our minds, the immoveable purpose of our hearts. And yet, my brethren, in this momentous concern, do you guard against delusion, with any portion of that caution, vigilance, and manly exercise of reason, which you bring into the ordinary affairs of life? Religion is the most rational thing in the world; and is it from religion alone, that sound reason shall be systematically excluded? To be deceived, in any concern, great or small, is to be defrauded of our first privilege, as thinking beings; to be wilfully deceived, is a voluntary relinquishment of reason; but to employ reason against reason, a spurious reason,

against the true; and thus to employ it, in the most important of all imaginable concerns, where deception is ruinous for the present, where it must be fatal throughout a long, an interminable future, — what madness, what frenzy, can furnish an adequate image and resemblance of this wild, this desperate, this remediless delusion? And, at this day, can it be justly said, that such delusion does not lamentably prevail? For how is it, that the vast majority, I will not say of the profane and profligate, but of the grave, the decent, and decorous, are preparing for eternity? Active and ardent, in all secular pursuits, by what mental opiate are they lulled asleep, in the pursuit of everlasting life? To answer this question fully, would be to exhibit the interior history of our species; for the sources of illusion are innumerable, its characters no less diversified, than the dispositions, habits and circumstances of mankind. But, whether from the absence, or misdirection, of thought; whether, from the prevalence of passion, or from the cold indifference of a worldly, calculating spirit, no delusion is more prominent or pernicious, under various forms, and in multiplied disguises, than a flattering, but fatal undervaluation, of that Christian holiness, “without which no man must see the Lord.” On this important subject, I

would intreat your attention, to a few words ; I shall not exceed that brevity, which the time, and the occasion, imperiously demand.

Multitudes are willing to persuade themselves, that an exemption from gross and scandalous offences, is a sure passport to eternal life. But it is worthy of our most serious consideration, that, as if to guard against this very delusion, the most awful of our Lord's denunciations, the most awakening of his parables, the most tremendous of his appeals, to an eternal judgment, are most pointedly directed against those, who rarely suspect, and never perhaps reprove themselves ; against cold, careless, indolent, sleeping Christians ; against many such, as, at this very day, stand high in self-esteem, and in the esteem of the public ; many, that would now be accounted virtuous, and praiseworthy, and hopeful candidates for heaven. Let us not, therefore, deceive ourselves. For, if the Scriptures be true ; and if the testimony be available, of the best and ablest Christian writers, ancient and modern ; and if that impartial reason, which guided the moral researches, even of the wiser heathen, be a competent arbiter and judge, — then, assuredly, we must pronounce, that many subtle, impalpable, impenetrable mysteries of iniquity, are noted in the book of God's remembrance ; and, at the last

day, will draw down the terrible sentence, of exclusion from his blessed presence, to regions of sorrow, darkness, and despair.

Nor, let us vainly imagine that it was, in any measure, any part, of our divine Redeemer's purpose or performance, to lower that standard of moral and spiritual attainment, uniformly described, in the law and the prophets, as an indispensable pre-requisite for the enjoyment of his everlasting kingdom. Far otherwise. Our blessed Lord was never divided against himself. His own inimitable discourses, and the writings of his inspired followers, and the universal sense of his universal Church, all, most harmoniously, and most invariably, proclaim the nature of that holiness, which he is ever solicitous to communicate, and which when he appears as our Judge, he will most assuredly require. And, indeed, if the case were otherwise; if Christianity were an expedient, for reducing the demands of moral rectitude, how could we soberly pronounce, that the Son of Man is "come to seek, and to save, that which was lost?" Would it not be more accordant with this monstrous supposition, to say, that the Son of Man is come, to perpetuate misery and vice, to prohibit the spiritual restoration of his creatures, to subject his own world unto the powers of darkness, and to

constitute a heaven, without holiness, without happiness, without rational enjoyment? But, blessed be God, these things are not so. For that, which every moral mind would ardently desire, the sacred Scriptures do most explicitly declare. For our Lord Jesus Christ came, "to bless us, in turning away every one of us from our iniquities." And "he gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity; and purify, unto himself, a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

Christianity, then, is uncompromising in its moral requisitions; whilst, in the only, true, and genuine sense, it is a mild and merciful religion; mild, in the reception of all, who seriously desire "to turn from their wickedness and live;" merciful, in the communication of that holiness, which is, emphatically, the life of the soul. Our blessed Lord's habitual conduct while on earth, evinced his tenderest compassion for the sheep that had wandered from his fold. To "comfort and help the weak-hearted, to raise up those who had fallen, to preach deliverance to the captives, to set at liberty, those who were tied and bound with the chain of their sins," these were the objects, for which He appeared eminently to live. And these are the objects, which his eternal Godhead is now desirous to accomplish, even

amidst those haunts of wretchedness and vice, where his name is never pronounced, but by the voice of blasphemy; his power never invoked, but in the language of imprecation and despair.

If it were practicable, it would be most undesirable, to fathom those depths of human degradation, from the bare imagination of which, every mind of sensibility must instinctively recoil. But it is often, in those very depths, that the burthened heart, prepared by the kind severity of a good Providence, and softened by the gentle yet powerful influence of heavenly grace, discovers, through the gloom, a ray of hope and consolation. Yes, my brethren; if we were indued with a portion of His incommunicable perception, 'unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid,' we should, doubtless, in many instances, among those unhappy females, the most destitute and forsaken of our fellow-creatures, the victims, at once, and the outcasts, of this present evil world,—amongst those, in many instances, we should, doubtless, trace the characters of sorrow, of compunction, of burning shame, of agonizing wishes that it were possible to escape from "the body of this death;" to emerge from this gulph of abandonment; and to attain the lowest, and most humble situation, compatible with honesty and virtue.

Truly, the condition of but one awakened spirit, however disregarded among mortals, is an object of unspeakable interest in heaven. Angels view it, with affectionate solicitude; God himself, with infinitely more than parental commiseration. Enter, then, my brethren, enter, for a few moments, into the house of mourning. Behold that unhappy female; she once, like many here, was gay and cheerful, full of hope, and full of promise; unsuspecting of the snares, and the delusions of merciless man,—but too often countenanced, and supported, by a merciless world. Examine that heart. It may prove a salutary lesson. What a tumult of thought and feeling! What recollections of happier days! What horror of the present! The days of innocence and purity; the simple pleasures of childhood; the early lessons of a tender and religious parent; the first time, when the idea of God and heaven were pleasant to the soul; the earliest workings of that vanity, which was the source of all that unhappily ensued; that dreadful day, when peace, and self-respect, and purity of conscience, departed, like the guardian spirits of God's own desecrated Temple, departed, and never since, for a single moment, revisited that ruined and degraded mind; the complicated miseries, that followed; the dreadful consciousness, of being without a friend, in

earth or heaven; the anticipated horrors of a future judgment; the present hell, of a perturbed, an accusing, an avenging conscience; all, with compacted force, and with intolerable conviction, flash upon the mind, and heart; all fire the brain, almost to madness and despair. But, even now, the moment of deliverance is at hand; even now, the clouds disperse; even now, the light of heaven is distinguished through the gloom; the sinner is become a penitent; the wanderer into a far country, is given to behold, her native home; she feels, that God is still the Father of mercies; that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners;" and, though she dares not "so much as lift up her eyes unto heaven," and though she cannot give utterance to feelings, which words never could convey,—that "still small voice" is audible to God: "How many hired servants of my Father, have bread enough, and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise, and go unto my Father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy child: make me as one of thy hired servants!"

DISCOURSE X. *

SAINT MARK i. 30, 31.

BUT SIMON'S WIFE'S MOTHER LAY SICK OF A FEVER; AND ANON THEY TELL HIM OF HER; AND HE CAME, AND TOOK HER BY THE HAND, AND LIFTED HER UP; AND IMMEDIATELY THE FEVER LEFT HER, AND SHE MINISTERED UNTO THEM.

WE learn from the volume of inspiration, that man was originally formed with the two great capacities, of happiness and immortality. But, when, by ceasing to be good, he failed to be happy, it was ordained, not more in judgment, than in mercy, that, in this life, he should not be immortal. To a sinful race, eternity of days would have been eternity of wretchedness; while death and disease, the wages and chastisement of sin, were graciously converted into

* Preached in Dublin, for the Whitworth Fever-Hospital, 1819.

means of restoration. The frequency of disease, acting as the remembrancer of mortality; and the certainty of death, enjoining us to prepare for an untried, unseen, and everlasting world.

But disease is more than the remembrancer of death. She brings the sufferer back, to the healing presence of his Maker; to that happiness, even in this life, for which he was originally designed. But who can estimate the full value of this sacred office? They alone can do so, who cultivate religion as their first and great concern. And how few there are, who thus cultivate religion? There is, however, a solid, though inferior benefit, respecting which we may appeal, to every man of sound judgment, and of a sober mind. For, if all were to luxuriate, in the exuberance of health; if there were no disease, to quell the mad intemperance of some, and stimulate the morbid indolence of others; if the disorders of the moral system, were not occasionally corrected, by the disorders of the physical; what would this world be, or where would God find a place in it? A few superior spirits might, perhaps, escape the general contagion. But the mind recoils, at the bare imagination of those horrors, which, in such a state of things, would pervade the great fabric of society. On the contrary, let us look

around, each in the sphere of our several connections, and let us pronounce, how much awakened thought, how much conscientious feeling, how much patience under suffering, how much moderation in prosperity, we know and feel, to have been, directly, or indirectly, produced by the salutary visitations of disease. And, though, in too many instances, these good impressions have been transitory, it cannot be denied that the accumulated effects upon society, are both permanent, and beneficial, while, in several individuals, these favourable commencements are gradually ripening into fruits of happiness and peace.

The mercy of God, in thus consecrating the misery of man, was peculiarly displayed, when He was manifested in our flesh. While sojourning among us, He so met, and so relieved, the corporal sufferings of those who sought his aid, as to attract them, almost irresistibly, to himself. By the instant removal of inveterate disease, He repeatedly proved himself Lord of material nature; while, by the gracious and winning condescension of his manner, He invariably showed himself Master of the human heart. In every act of this kind, his moral goodness mitigates, if we may so speak, the majesty of his physical power. In reading the record of his mighty

works, we almost forget that they were miraculous : our attention is so rivetted on himself, that we lose sight of his performances ; we feel, that our incarnate God is present ; and, in his presence, we are unconscious that the course of nature is suspended.

A feeling of this kind, would seem to have influenced the writers of the four Gospels. They give us the minutest features of our Lord's character and manner ;- but they commonly relate his most stupendous deeds, with all imaginable brevity. They never intimate their own surprise ; they barely notice that of the beholders ; and, in those rare instances where they give a detail of circumstances, they always prefer the moral, to the miraculous. The text affords precisely such an example of significant compression. It occurs, you will recollect, in the first chapter of Saint Mark's Gospel ; and records the second of those miracles, which come within the sphere of his narrative. The transaction must have been of special interest to the Evangelist ; for the person miraculously healed, was the near relation of his guide, and spiritual parent. Yet, how few and simple are his words : " But Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever : and anon, they tell Him of her ; and He came, and took her by the

hand, and lifted her up; and immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them."

Yet, few and simple as these words appear, their substance could not speedily be exhausted. And, to much of their important matter, the present time will scarce allow a cursory allusion. We may just observe, that the miracle is not only recorded, but attested; that the master of the family is named, and that master, to a moral certainty, the Evangelist's informant; that the cure was instantaneous, and complete, for, "immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them;" that is, at one and the same moment, fever and debility were put to flight: an effect, beyond the utmost reach of medical skill. It was thus, on another occasion, that our blessed Lord instantaneously, and at once, becalmed the winds and the waves; a coincidence, unprecedented and unequalled, in the ordinary course of nature.

But the moral features, are the striking features, of this merciful deliverance. For example: our Redeemer had but to speak the word, and it was done. But the sacred historian tells us, that "He came." He would not separate the matter, from the manner, of kindness. He approached the fisherman's humble roof, and visited the bed of sickness, with benevolent condescen-

sion. Again: there were a thousand ways, in which He might have triumphed over her disease; but He chose the way of tenderness, and gentle caution; "He took her by the hand, and lifted her up." Could this highly favoured among women, could any one of the by-standers, ever forget this touching scene? Ought we, my brethren, ever to forget it? Assuredly, it is our own concern. For, in like manner, He is now ready to deal with the weakest among us; for, at this moment, no less than during his presence upon earth, it is his joy to "gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young."

Another circumstance remains: the last in this narrative, to which I shall advert. We cannot question, that, from the very first, our Lord was quite aware of the malady, in all its stages. Omniscience needs not wait for human information. Yet, in this instance, He saw fit to wait; for, we read, that, "anon they tell Him of her;" and then, and not till then, "He came;" a proceeding, altogether in character with his usual course. For, while He never refused his aid, to those for whom it was implored, or to whom his notice was directed, it is remarkable that He never went in quest of objects. It is not for us, to explore the variety of causes, which influence all-

seeing Wisdom: but it were blindness, not to perceive, that, in pursuing this course, our divine Master recognized, and confirmed, another providential purpose of disease; namely, to bind man to man, in mutual offices of commiseration and assistance. Christ did not commonly heal, when man did not co-operate; but where man did co-operate, his mercy was unbounded. And, while this mercy of incarnate Godhead, drew human nature, as before it never had been drawn, to fulfil the first and great commandment, his ready concurrence with the wishes of the beneficent and humane, equally promoted the fulfilment of the second, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour, as thyself."

These, then, are the prime considerations which call us to works of mercy: physical evils enter into the present economy of nature, not that man may be overwhelmed, but that he may be disciplined, and amended. Divine Wisdom afflicts in measure: the chastisement is never suffered to exceed the occasion; and the merciful are commonly the instruments of Providence, through whom the pain is assuaged, or the rod is withdrawn.

But, in the Christian dispensation, the merciful are more than providential instruments. They are efficient members of that body, which has

Christ for its head. From the period of our Lord's ascension, to the present moment, and until the consummation of all things, He has been and will continue to be, no less really, though invisibly, the source of healing virtue, than when He personally dwelt among us. The difference is, that, instead of manifesting that virtue by direct acts of power, He is now beneficially operative, through natural and moral means ; and on those who imbibe any portion of his spirit, He eminently confers the privilege, of becoming administrators of those means. Would we, therefore, prove ourselves imitators, and assistants, of Him who "went about doing good?" It remains, that, after his example, and through his influence, we also, in our measure, go about doing good. The departments of this blessed work are various ; and the capacities for it, are adjusted in most wise proportion. Some may best assist, by their mental, others, by their bodily exertions ; some, by their talent for arrangement, others, by their execution in detail ; some, by their stores of wealth, others, by their influence with the wealthy : but all are bound to co-operate, according to that ability which God hath given ; and amidst their variety of ministrations, all are to seek from above, and to cherish within themselves, one and the self-same spirit of brotherly

affection. For this is made the test of our Christianity, by Him who cannot err; for, "by this," saith our divine Redeemer, "shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

From the commencement of Christianity, this divine principle has been happily effective. In the infancy of the Church, the miracles of Apostles, and the alms of apostolic men, the fruit of faith, of prayer, and of laborious self-denial, were alike employed, in the alleviation of human misery; while those who could not contribute in any other manner, were unlimited in their contributions of personal danger and fatigue. But, when the Christian community became possessed of wealth, and power,—public plans, and institutions, such as the world never before had seen, gave the most splendid and affecting testimony, that our religion, was a religion of benignity and love. It is well known, to those in the least acquainted with antiquity, that the first hospital for the reception of the sick, was opened by Saint Ephrem at Edessa. At a later period, the apostate Emperor Julian, declared his resolution of establishing hospitals in every city; and frankly declared his intention, to deprive the Christians of the applause, as well as the advantage, which they had acquired, by the exclusive practice of charity

and beneficence. And, if we pass from the East, to the West, in all quarters of her vast dominion, we shall find Christianity immutably the same. One example out of multitudes, I would recommend to your particular attention. An example, which drew from the historian of the declining empire, a generous burst of feeling, such as not even his infidelity could suppress, or qualify. It were injustice, to use any other than his own words. He had been just describing the lamentable sack of Rome, under the King of the Vandals; and he thus proceeds with his narrative:—‘Many thousand Romans, of both sexes, chosen for some useful or agreeable qualification, reluctantly embarked on board the fleet of Genseric: and their distress was aggravated, by the unfeeling barbarians, who, in the division of the booty, separated the wives from their husbands, and the children from their parents. The charity of DEOGRATIUS, Bishop of Carthage, was their only consolation and support. He generously sold the gold and silver plate of the church, to purchase the freedom of some, to alleviate the slavery of others, and to assist the wants and infirmities of a captive multitude, whose health was impaired by the hardships which they had suffered, in their passage from Italy to Africa. By his order, two spacious churches were converted

into hospitals: the sick were distributed in convenient beds; and liberally supplied with food and medicines: and the aged prelate, repeated his visits, both in the day and night, with an assiduity that surpassed his strength; and a tender sympathy which enhanced the value of his services. Compare this scene with the field of Cannæ: and judge between Hannibal, and the successor of Saint Cyprian¹.

Thus far the historian: happy, if he had always written in so good a spirit! We should then possess a history of the church and empire, which might be read, not only without moral contamination, but with religious improvement and delight. We might then trace, with uninterrupted satisfaction, and in pages of the richest eloquence, the progress of triumphant Christianity, from its humble, but miraculous commencement, through that long succession of ages, whose barbarity it civilized, whose wants it relieved, and whose calamities it pitied and assuaged.

But we must not dwell upon more distant times: a rapid glance is all that can be given, to, what are usually called, the dark ages. Yet even such a glance, will be productive of, at least, one comfortable reflection; that, in a period, when intellect might seem to have been

¹ Decl. and Fall, vol. vi. 154.

retrograde, the social affections were undoubtedly progressive. Divine Providence, was, in this respect, attentive to the interests of a remote posterity: for, the cumbrous magnitude of ancient charitable foundations, which, like the immortal Pyramids, might pass for the work, not only of other days, but of another race of beings, has not wholly lost its direct influence, and, while the world lasts, will never lose its indirect and consequential influence, upon society at large. And, with whatever probability, in some instances, the motives of the founders may be questioned, to the honour of our religion it must be recollected, that no age of the Church has been left without glorious examples, the humility of whose faith, and the simplicity of whose intentions, diffused a mild and irreproachable lustre over all their deeds of mercy. Nor, should it be omitted, that if the liberality of our ancestors, when viewed in the lights of the nineteenth century, may sometimes appear of doubtful utility, we are to regard that liberality, as providentially adapted to the wants and fitnesses of other times; and that, unless we place ourselves in circumstances precisely similar, we cannot equitably judge the merits of the question. For example: the indiscriminate almsgiving of noble families, and of

religious houses, was, obviously, not favourable to industry: but the channels of industry, too, were, at the same time, scanty and precarious; nor could they have been multiplied, and made certain, without altering the whole face of society, and without preventing, by prematurely striving to anticipate, a better order of things.

But, whatever were the errors, either of the motive, or the system, it is our happiness to rest assured, that the work of charity went on. It is enough for us to know, that the hungry were fed, the naked were clothed, the prisoners were comforted, the captives were redeemed from bondage, and the dying were rescued from the grave. It were an ungracious office, to criticize and depreciate the good works of our fathers; it were a worthless labour, to prove that our faith is more, by showing that our munificence is less. Be it our object, rather to illustrate our faith, by our humanity; and, while we contemplate the merciful acts of those who went before us, to listen to that voice of Christianity, which speaks, or ought to speak, within the heart of every one of us, — “Go and do thou likewise!”

I trust, my brethren, we are now assembled to realize this weighty exhortation. I trust we come prepared, not merely to emulate, but to

excel the charitable zeal of our fathers. For, with our superior advantages, not to excel, would be to prove ourselves degenerate. It is a known fact, that the prosperity of charitable institutions, has, hitherto, kept pace with advancing civilization. Enlargement of the human mind under Christian influence, has always occasioned a proportional increase, not only of wisdom, but of intensity, in doing good. If, then, we diminish our benevolent exertions, we shall afford melancholy evidence, that we are receding from that standard, both of mental, and moral improvement, to which it had been fondly presumed, we were in daily progress, I would hope, however, that no such evidence will this day be afforded: and I shall detain you but a short time, from the active work of mercy.

You need not be informed, that establishments for the relief of the diseased, have been more numerous, and more efficient, in the British empire, than in any other part of Europe. And it is gratifying to know, that in this merciful department, the world is indebted to our sister island, for the most salutary improvement of modern times. A fever-hospital was first established, about forty years ago, by the late benevolent Dr. Haygarth, in the city of Chester.

The claims of such an institution for public support, are now too generally known, to require

detailed exposition, and too generally admitted to need argumentative proof. A fever-hospital, is, at once, the refuge of the diseased, and the safeguard of the healthy. On these two facts, combined with a few resulting particulars, I would confidently repose the success of the present application. And, while I entreat your patient attention to a simple statement of these matters, it shall be my effort to avoid a single needless word.

The extent of individual wretchedness, which we are this day assembled to relieve, would baffle all attempts at general description. Language must utterly fail, to place before you any thing approaching the reality of such horrors. Some few cases, however, it would be injustice to withhold. I shall read them, in the very words of that humane and intelligent physician, by whom they were witnessed and reported: ¹

‘ Having been called to attend a most industrious, and well-regulated poor family, I found the wife, labouring under an affection of the lungs, so severe, that she was obliged to be supported in her bed. She was then large with child; and, from the severity of her illness, soon after underwent premature delivery. Nothing could exceed the attention of the husband: day and night, he sat behind her, to support her

¹ W. J. Morgan, M. D.

in that position, in which alone she could breathe : until oppressed with anxiety, and loss of rest, he was attacked by fever. There was no place for him, in his own little habitation ; neither neighbours nor friends could receive a fever patient ; and, even could they give him a place to lay himself, how could they nurse, tend, and support him ? He was received into the Whitworth Fever Hospital ; in which, after a very severe fever, he recovered.

‘ I was called to visit a poor patient, residing in the vicinity of Sackville Street. On inquiring into the probable cause of the illness, I learned that not less than thirteen persons had been sent from that house, to fever hospitals, during the summer. I was also informed, that a poor young man resided in an upper room ; and that he, and his sister who lived with him, had not been free from fever for some months. I proceeded to the room, and found two beings on some straw, in the corner of a small garret. The man was scarcely of human appearance : his squalid, emaciated, stupid look, was truly frightful. His sister informed me, that he had recovered the last attack (for he had many relapses) very slowly, and that she had frequently taken the fever, from attending him ; she added, that, but for the humanity of the

other inmates of the house, they must both have perished through want. That day I visited five other patients, in the same narrow lane; three of whom were children. I offered to go down to the cellar, in which they were, but their mother told me, that I could not have found my way to the spot where they were lying. These little creatures were brought up to me, black with dirt, evidently many days ill; and so dark was this miserable dwelling, that they wept with pain, when they attempted to open their eyes to the light. They were all taken to the Whitworth Hospital.

‘ A very fine young man was seized with fever in Autumn last. His wife waited on me, to request admission into the Whitworth Fever Hospital. But there was then no vacancy; the other hospitals were also full; and, in the mean time, he became so ill, that he died the day after he had procured admission.

‘ Within the last week, I was called to visit a family in the neighbourhood of a respectable private street, the residence of many of our nobility; for some of whom the mother of the family washed clothes. I had sent her son to the Hospital, a fortnight before; and now found her, and two other of her children, sick of a fever. Her house, like almost all in which the poor live,

was well calculated for a nursery of contagion : so small, that I could with difficulty pass between the beds ; and so dark, that, in the noon-day, they were obliged to light a candle for me to see the patients.'

These, my brethren, are but scanty specimens of that misery which abounds, in every quarter of your city : and I am confident, that the strength and the simplicity of this plain recital, cannot fail to answer for its conscientious fidelity. But, could the frightful aggregate be presented to your view, could the mass of contagion, at this moment diffused, and diffusing itself, through the streets, and crowded lanes of this metropolis, be palpably and visibly embodied, who that is human among you, would not feel eager to do all, that man can do, towards its utter extirpation ? What would you not do, if you felt and saw ? Recollect, however, that, though unfelt and unseen, by many of the gay, the busy, and the thoughtless, the misery is extended, is urgent, is terrific. And, unless the wealth and the munificence of those whom I see around me, and of others, whom I lament not to see, interpose between the whole and the infected, between the living and the dead, the consequences to yourselves, to your children, to those, if possible, yet nearer to your hearts, may be calamitous, beyond the

reach of calculation. To know the bare localities of this city, is to know the magnitude of your danger. How would you shudder, to see your whole vicinity in flames? And can you sit indifferent and unmoved, when, far more terrible than fire, the pestilence is, and has been, for the last eighteen months, raging around you, about you, at your very doors? Who does not know, that, in this metropolis, beyond most others, the miserable abodes of the poor, are in contact with the luxurious dwellings of the rich? Some of the cases which have been just read to you, go to illustrate this fact; and, were further examples needful, they could be multiplied alarmingly. But I spare your feelings: and I leave it to your sober judgment to determine, putting humanity out of the question, and barely considering the vicinity in which you live, and the risks to which you are exposed, whether it can be wise, whether it can be prudent, to withhold, I would almost say, your unlimited bounty, from an Institution, which, if you enable it, will instantly extract from the mass, those points from whence contagion might have spread, and, unless thus extracted, too probably will so spread, as to accumulate into those horrid forms, which the full-grown virulence of fever exhibits, in ships, in camps, in prisons? These are the calamities

which you are this day invited to avert; not from the poor only, (though, if ye be followers of Christ, you will not disregard the poor,) but from yourselves, your parents, your children, your wives, your husbands. Such an invitation, surely, will not be rejected.

While endeavouring, for myself, and in my closet, to investigate the advantages of a fever-hospital, I can truly say, that the subject so expanded, so grew upon me, and presented itself in so many points of view, each, as in a boundless range of mountain scenery, rising above the other, that I was lost in the contemplation. It is with the results of this perplexity, that I now appear before you. To state all, or nearly all, that has occurred, or been made known to me, is quite impracticable. You will pardon me, therefore, if, in a case where selection was, at once, difficult and indispensable, I may happen to have selected amiss. And I trust you will not visit upon this charity, the errors, not of my will, but of my judgment.

Next to the grand distinctive feature of separating the infected, from the uninfected, I would mention the change which frequently takes place in the fever patient, on his removal from the close, ill-ventilated habitations of poverty, to the cleanly, spacious, well-aired wards, of a properly

regulated hospital. I am enabled to state, from unquestionable medical authority, that, by the mere influence of this salutary transition, many cases, which, at reception, bore the most alarming aspect, have almost immediately assumed an appearance comparatively mild.

Next in order, and superior in importance, stands the facility afforded for suitable medical treatment. It is well known, that much of the management of fever, consists in avoiding every cause of excitement; for example, light, heat, noises, thirst, but, especially, all officious and unnecessary disturbance. And in hospitals alone, can this caution be maintained with rigorous observance. The apparently trivial excitement, caused by the visit of a friend or relative, has, frequently, produced the worst effects. In an hospital, such visits can always be prevented; in a private family, they often cannot. This holds true, even in the upper walks of life: but those who are at all acquainted with the preposterous good nature of the lower orders, must know, that, in every particular, their treatment of the sick, is diametrically the reverse of what it ought to be. The removal, therefore, of a poor man from his own family, to a fever-hospital, is, in very many instances, a transition from almost inevitable death, to probable recovery.

Again; a fever-hospital is laid out, from its very foundation, with a view to the accommodation of fever patients: hence, it possesses advantages, which few persons visited with fever, could, in private houses, be able to procure. And thus, the labouring classes, who, in their own apartments must have struggled against a dangerous disease, aggravated by the most unfavourable circumstances, are, on their removal to this institution, surrounded with conveniences and comforts, beyond the reach of their superiors. These are but a few of the particulars, which combine to check the progress of contagion; the rest, I must leave it to your own experience to supply.

One other consideration yet remains. I will briefly state it, and have done. A fever, then, is peculiarly dreadful, when regarded, as Christians cannot but regard it, in the light of eternity. The incapacity for serious recollection, which it brings; the rapidity, with which it advances into delirium, and, from delirium to insensibility, — are terrible considerations when the whole lights upon one, who has lived without God in the world. A slow disease almost forces a man to think; and, if he has not incurably hardened his heart, he turns to religion: a fever leaves neither time nor ability for thought; as the man has lived, so he must die. Is not this,

also, a Christian motive for zealously supporting a charity, fitted, above all other charities, to avert this last and greatest evil? The life which is thus prolonged, may be, for ever after, improved by contemplation of the crisis, through which it has passed. We know, that dangerous illness has been, to many a man, the date of a happier course. The voice of Providence makes itself be heard, in terms the same with those of our blessed Lord, "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon thee." Who, that has Christian sentiments, would not rejoice to co-operate, in this undeniable provision of the great beneficent scheme? Co-operate then, this day, with all your hearts, and with a liberal portion of your substance, for so shall you "lay up in store for yourselves, a good foundation, against the day of necessity."

And who, of all those that are now called to contribute, can question the expediency, of making the case of disease, and of mortality his own? Death, in this peculiarly terrific form, knocks alike at the palace and the cottage. Yet, can we say *alike*? For, is it not universally found, that fever, amidst ease and affluence, is far more generally fatal, than in the lowest ranks? The deeper contrast, and the keener reflections, operating unspeakably against the more opulent

patient. It is, therefore, an awfully impressive work, in which we are, at this moment, engaged: and not to be made by it, more thoughtful, more conscientious, more disposed to obtain that "peace of God, which passeth all understanding," would bespeak an insensibility, not rashly to be imputed. Let us, then, remember death: and let us well weigh that solemn admonition of the prophet,—
"Break off thy sins, by righteousness; and thine iniquity, by showing mercy to the poor." Such acts, may tend to avert the calamity which they relieve: they are appointed by our Lord, as the means of averting malediction from what we possess, "Give alms of thy goods, and behold all things are clean unto you." Finally, my brethren, such acts will not indeed, take us to heaven, because they do not fit for it: but they may, and they do, tend to bring down that grace of God, which does fit for heaven. For the inference is undeniably plain, from the words of our divine Redeemer, that, "if we are faithful in the unrighteous mammon, we shall be intrusted with the true riches;" if we are faithful in the distribution of that wealth, which is only committed to our keeping as a trust, we shall, in the end, be gifted with those holy and happy dispositions, which, to all eternity, shall be immutably our own.

DISCOURSE XI. *

PSALM lxxviii. 5—8.

HE MADE A COVENANT WITH JACOB, AND GAVE ISRAEL A LAW : WHICH HE COMMANDED OUR FOREFATHERS TO TEACH THEIR CHILDREN : THAT THEIR POSTERITY MIGHT KNOW IT, AND THE CHILDREN THAT WERE YET UNBORN : TO THE INTENT, THAT, WHEN THEY CAME UP, THEY MIGHT SHOW THEIR CHILDREN THE SAME : THAT THEY MIGHT PUT THEIR TRUST IN GOD ; AND NOT TO FORGET THE WORKS OF GOD ; BUT TO KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS.

FROM the very beginning, it hath pleased Almighty God, to give his creatures full proof and assurance of a revealed religion. This proof and assurance having been afforded, let us suppose, that man had been left to discover, for himself, the best manner of communicating this religion to posterity ; and, under these circumstances, we may

* Preached for the Philanthropic Society, London, 1824.

imagine, that he would anxiously revolve in his mind, questions such as these : 'The will of God has been made known to me ; it is intrusted with me as a deposit, for the benefit of others : how shall I impart it to them, not as matter of mere speculative belief, but as the great principle of life and action ? How shall I communicate this knowledge, in such a manner, that it shall be instilled, most deeply, into the hearts of individuals, and diffused, most widely, through society at large ? How shall I convey to generations yet unborn, all that respects the being, the nature, the providence, the grace of God, with any thing approaching to assurance, that these great truths shall be established, enduringly and for ever, among all the kindreds of the earth ?'

To such inquiries, human sagacity, it must be apprehended, could return no very satisfactory reply, But God himself has cleared up all doubts of this kind ; and has communicated his own gracious plan, for the accomplishment of these great designs. Religion, in order that it may become lasting and effectual, is ordained, by the Divine appointment, to be hereditary and transmissive. And if parents, from the beginning, had contributed their part, the world would, at this time, present a very different religious aspect, from that which unhappily prevails. That pa-

rents shall teach their children, and that the children so taught, shall, in their turn, become teachers of the next generation, from age to age, to the end of the world,—this is the Divine plan. An ordinance delivered from the earliest times; and renewed, in every succeeding stage, in every fresh modification of God's revealed will.

Thus, in the choice of an individual, fitted to become the father of the faithful, the founder of the *Patriarchal system*, we discover this to be the leading principle: "For I know him," said the Almighty, speaking of his servant Abraham, "that he will command his children and his household after him; and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment."

Again, after the delivery of the written law, when oral and traditional instruction might seem to have been, in a great measure, superseded, the same principle of hereditary and transmissive religion is yet more fully developed, and incorporated, in the *Jewish dispensation*: "What nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous, as all this law, which I set before you this day? Only, take heed unto thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thine heart, all the days of thy life; but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons.

And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thy heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children; and shalt talk of them, when thou sittest in the house, and when thou walkest by the way: and when thou liest down and when thou risest up." And, at a more advanced period of the Jewish history, in that most instructive Psalm of Asaph, itself a recapitulation of God's providential dealings with his people, we find the full developement of this wise and profound appointment, in the words of our text: "He made a covenant with Jacob, and gave Israel a law; which he commanded our forefathers to teach their children; that their posterity might know it, and the children that were yet unborn; to the intent, that when they came up, they might show their children the same; that they might put their trust in God; and not to forget the works of God; but to keep his commandments." Such was the ordinance of God: and the fruits of this ordinance are to be seen, in the writings of some, and in the lives of more, of the Old-Testament worthies. The fact is, that, in various instances, Judaism appears to have produced specimens of spiritual excellence, quite beyond the power of the Jewish system. And in subordination to the grace of God, the existence of these specimens can be

accounted for, only on this one principle, that the early religious training, enjoyed and practised under the *Patriarchal* dispensation, was transferred to the Jewish dispensation, and was not overwhelmed by the multiplied ceremonies of the Mosaic law. Thus, it can be shown, was nurtured and matured, the piety of Samuel and David, of Symeon and Anna, and of all those, who, towards the close of the Jewish economy, were "waiting for the consolation of Israel," and "spake often, one to another" respecting that day-spring from on high, that Sun of righteousness, who was soon to arise, with "healing in his wings."

Nor, in *Christianity*, the last and best *dispensation* of the grace of God, is this master-principle discarded, or forgotten. - When our Lord commanded little children to be brought unto him; when he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them; when he declared, that each of his followers must "enter into the kingdom of heaven as a little child;" when Saint Paul recognized in Saint Timothy, the faith which had dwelt in his grandmother Lois, and his mother Eunice, and reminded him, that, from a child he had known the holy Scriptures; when the same Saint Paul, exhorts all Christian parents, to "bring up their children, in the nurture and admonition of the

Lord," — in these and various passages of like import, we cannot but discern the identity, in this particular, of the *Patriarchal*, the *Jewish*, and the *Christian* schemes. In each, and in all of them, instruction is to be communicated in early youth; in each, and all of them, instruction is to be communicated, in order, that, through the grace of God, religion may become hereditary and transmissive; in each, and all of them, the religious institution of one generation, is intended to become the seed-plot of religion, in future generations, and in ages still to come.

There is no room, then, for mistaking the will of God, as to the way in which religion, his own revealed religion, should be communicated to mankind. But it is not enough, that we know the divine will concerning us; it is essential, also, that, so far as practicable, we acquaint ourselves with the grounds and reasons of that will. It is our bounden duty, in order to make this great law of revelation practically efficacious, that we enquire into its foundations and to this inquiry it is, that the text particularly invites us. The covenant made with Jacob, the law given unto Israel, God commanded the first generation of his people to teach their children: but, not satisfied with an authoritative command, he was graciously pleased to assign the reasons of it;

and thus; the duty of examining into this matter more largely for ourselves, is at once imposed, and impressed upon us.

Let us consider, therefore, in the *first* place, the natural causes which conduce to render a youthful training in religion, the best and most salutary training for man; why it is, that, if the child be trained up in the way he should go, when he is old he will not, probably, depart from it. Let us consider, *secondly*, the mode and process, in which early training will be most likely to produce its desired effect. And, *lastly*, let us consider the character of this training, as exemplified in its fruits.

I. *First*, then, with respect to the reasonableness of this divine appointment. The text itself, sets forth one particular, of the widest and most comprehensive kind; namely, that provision is thus made, which could be made in no other imaginable way, for linking together, in the one true faith and worship, the successive generations of mankind. And viewed in this single light, the benefits of this injunction are incalculable. Religion, thus received, on the one hand, from the parent, and communicated, on the other, to the child, will, in the nature of things, be likely to expand, and improve in quality, from generation to generation. In no other

manner, can the religious affections be so happily elicited, as by the union, in one and the same person, of the parent and instructor. For, each father, and each mother, in every lesson that they give, will thus recall, by the strongest and most delightful associations, the tenderness and feeling, with which, lessons of the same kind, had been imparted to themselves, by parents now no more. Never, perhaps, do children arise, and so emphatically call their departed parents blessed, as when they are communicating Christian instruction to children of their own. Thus, our best natural affections are enlisted in the service of religion; and the piety and goodness of generations that are past, are the pledge and preparation, of equal piety, and equal goodness, in generations still to come.

It is a peculiar advantage of this mode of training, that it gives, in the infant mind and heart, the pre-occupancy to right views and feelings. The importance of first impressions, has, at all times, been acknowledged and enforced, by all moralists. But its religious importance, is transcendentally great. And here, it is matter of thankfulness, that, in the department where first impressions are, beyond comparison, the most important, they are, if the right course be pursued, the most easily secured.

In all ordinary pursuits, in all which relate to this world, as contradistinguished from the next, we must become proficient, through the exercise of reason and of taste. In religion, it is otherwise. Here, we must become proficient, chiefly by the right engagements of our affections. Now, it is certain, that our reason and our taste are of slow growth, and not promptly forthcoming at a tender age; while, it is equally certain, that, from the very first, the affections are in full vigour, in full play, and perhaps, in their most perfect state. The seeds of the future artist or poet, or politician, or philosopher, cannot be sown, till the reason and the taste are somewhat developed; that is, till the infant has, at least, become the child; perhaps, we may say, till the child is grown into the youth. But, in earlier infancy, the affections are at once the most readily engaged, and the most deeply interested. And, in the soil of the affections, the seeds of Christianity may be sown, by a judicious parent, long before it shall be possible even to suggest, with any hopes of being understood, the difference between one and another of the common walks and professions of life. But this is not all; for while, in earliest infancy, the affections, the great auxiliaries of religion, are most impressible, in earliest infancy, too,

the passions, which are the great antagonists of religion, are most easily regulated and controlled. Constituted as human nature is, and ever has been since the fall, it is indispensable to the very existence of religion in the heart, that the passions be subjugated. But this subjugation cannot be either so certain, or so complete, if attempted, for the first time, in after life. "It is good for a man," says the word of inspiration, "that he bear the yoke in his youth;" and that, among other reasons, for this reason especially, that, in youth, the yoke is most easy, and the burthen is most light. It is before the passions have gained strength, that they will be most successfully encountered; these serpents will be most surely strangled in the cradle. Thus, will be avoided the rude shocks, and bitter pangs, which else, must be encountered in the course of life. Thus, will be secured, from the beginning, that tenderness of conscience, which, at all times, can be managed with a light hand, and an easy curb.

Another reason, why the earliest age is the best age, for the conveyance of religion, is this; that the young mind is the most flexible and tender; the most apt to receive, with accuracy, the stamp impressed upon it; and, not only the most apt to receive, but the most certain to

retain. Contraries are here united ; the softness of wax, with the tenacity of marble. And the reality of this union may be illustrated, by the familiar experience of every day. We see, that old persons commonly forget the transactions of the last week, the conversation of the last hour ; but they are perfectly at home, in the occurrences of their early youth ; they can repeat, with ease, and fidelity, the lessons which they learned, and the words which they heard, when they were children. Why ? because their minds were then both tender, and tenacious. How important, then, that nothing be said, nothing done, in the presence of the infant, which we should not wish to see transferred into the life and conduct of the future man :—that the best truths, the best principles, the best feelings, be implanted at that age, when every thing is easily impressed ; and when all that is once impressed, is lastingly retained !

Again ; religion should be communicated early, because it can then be communicated most agreeably. The religion which is taken up after the character is formed, is, commonly, attained with pain and difficulty ; it has more in it of the task-master, than of the companion and the friend. Hence it is, that the Christianity, the sincere Christianity, of many worthy

and valuable persons, is, too often, gloomy and repulsive. But when the infant spirit is, gently and insensibly, drawn to delight itself in God; when the endearments of parental kindness, are associated with daily lessons of religious truth; when the child has been habituated to look to its parents, in the place of God, and drawn to look through its parents, up to God; when it has learned, to extend the notion of natural parents, friends, protectors, and benefactors, and to apply this extended notion, in a higher sense, to the great and good God,—then, provision is made, for uniting the sense of happiness, with all religious exercises. And, in after life, to go to the place of public worship, to join in family prayer, to engage in the secret devotions of the closet, all these things, instead of being irksome, will be delightful: it will be going to a Father's house; taking sweet counsel with those whom we love; and feeding on thoughts, which spontaneously transport us, from a world of vanity and vexation, to the calm delightfulness of heavenly enjoyment.

II. Thus far, we have been considering the principles and reasons of that law of God in the text, which declares, that religion is to be made hereditary and transmissive; it is my duty, in the *next* place, to view this law, in its practical

application to human life ; in order, that we may the more familiarly apprehend the process of this plan, as carried into actual operation.

In the religious education of youth, our first concern should be, as I have already intimated, with the affections and the passions. A truth which plainly instructs us, that it is *training*, rather than *teaching*, which should be our earliest object. In the way of moral discipline and training, many valuable lessons may and should be taught, many lasting principles instilled, before the child is able to understand the difference between right and wrong. The very senses, which, in other circumstances, perpetually withdraw us from things eternal, may now receive such a right direction, as will make them conductors to heaven. The blind man knows colours by the touch ; how, we cannot comprehend, but so the fact is : the old philosophers talked of knowing God, by a certain intellectual touch ; and this, also, is true ; we know not how, but so it is : "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth ; and so is every one that is born of the Spirit." But, even in this mysterious process, Christian parents may assist. They may so discipline the very senses of their children, that

beautiful sights, delightful sounds, and grateful odours, may be associated, as they are, in the book of God's word, with the future blessedness of heaven, and with the present anticipation of heaven upon earth. But there is a graver, yet not less indispensable part of the process. From the first dawn of sensation, the child must learn, to submit his will to the government and direction, his passions to the censure and control, of those whom Providence has placed over it : from the first dawn of sensation, the child should be led to bow itself to *authority* ; at this early age, the only guidance it is capable of following. First, to human authority, as representing the divine ; until, having, thereby, imbibed the habit of willing obedience to the authority of man, it can, in due time, be led upwards, to know, to reverence, and to obey, the supreme authority of God.

The ground-work thus wisely laid, in early moral training, the child will be prepared, as mind and intellect unfold, to enter, by due steps, on the exercise of the understanding. This will be done, without violence to the will, for the will has already been broken in ; this will be done, without injury to the heart, for the heart has been already prepossessed. The whole faculties of the child's nature being now

cultivated, in the order intended and ordained by Almighty God, progress in its attainments, whether of divine or human knowledge, will be made with freedom, with sobriety, and safety. Intellect, on the one hand, will not be exercised at the expense of the affections; there will be no danger of a chill: while, on the other hand, the child will, in proportion to the goodness of its moral training, be spared the ordinary, but perilous temptations, of vanity, of self-esteem, and self-complacency; temptations, which, experience shows us, are, but too generally, and too fatally, attendant on man's intellectual progress, whether in the exercise of reason, or in the acquisition of science and learning.

In the present day, it is peculiarly needful to recur to those only just and true principles, of early religious education. There now exists an unexampled zeal for the instruction of the young; but a zeal, it is to be feared, not always according unto knowledge. The opinion would seem to be daily gaining ground, that, to exercise the head, is to make sure of the heart; that the child whose understanding is cultivated, will himself come to discipline his passions, and regulate his affections, in the right way; in a word, that the arts of reading, writing, and arithmetic, constitute a *panacea* for all the men-

tal and moral maladies of our nature. But this opinion is wholly without sanction, either from Scripture or from experience. For my own part, I do not see, how, in itself, the *act* of reading, should be more morally beneficial to child or to grown person, than the *faculty* of hearing. While, on the other hand, I am compelled to observe the superadded danger, that they who now *hear* bad words in bad company, may be drawn to *read* bad words, in bad publications. Nor is even the reading of the best books, in itself, a moral security. Infidels and profligates have often been students of the Scriptures: and to many, who read the Scriptures as their daily textbook of instruction, it may prove little more, than the mere vehicle of so much mechanical power. The preparation of the heart is indispensable; and unless the heart be wisely and carefully prepared, sacred knowledge itself, may be perverted into the instrument of wickedness, and seal of reprobation. But, whilst I would guard against the error, that knowledge is all in all, I cheerfully and thankfully admit, that knowledge is most valuable, in its proper place and degree. What I would impress, is simply this, that training is previous to teaching; that teaching without training, may be useless, may be hurtful; that training without teaching, that

is, without grammatical instruction, may make a sincere and pious Christian; that a man may go to heaven, who does not know his alphabet. On the whole, then, with respect to training and to teaching, I would say, "This thou shouldest have done; and not have left the other undone."

III. And now, in the *third* place, we are to consider the character of a youthful religious training, as exemplified in its fruits.

The natural and proper fruit, then, of an early religious culture, under the management of wise and pious parents, is this, — that the children so trained, will, through the grace, and under the providence, of God, persevere unto the end in the right and good way. The object and the result of such training have been admirably stated in the text: "That they may put their trust in God: and not forget the works of God; but keep his commandments." Here are the confidence, the tenacity, and the continuance of true religion.

These results do not, indeed, in the present state of things, always follow. In honest, upright, conscientious, and religious parents, there is often want of judgment; and a right judgment, so important in all things, in religious education is indispensable. But, even when the

judgment is sound, and when the training is as pious as it is wise, unfavourable circumstances may interfere, and blight the fairest prospects of a spiritual harvest. But it is my firm belief, that, if full justice were done by Christian parents to their children, and if surrounding circumstances could be so ordered, as to aid, instead of counteracting, the procedure, the *spiritual* relation between pious parents and a pious offspring, would then be as regular, as certain, and as necessary, as the *natural* relation. This, it would seem, both from Scripture and from the reason of the case, is the object of Providence; however it is marred and frustrated, by the weakness and perversity of man.

We do not, however, deny the possibility, (God forbid we should!) that persons who have been totally neglected in early youth, may, through the grace of God, in after life, be brought to a deep and saving sense and feeling of religion. But this I must say, that the religion so attained, is, too commonly, harsh and austere: arrived at with difficulty, difficulty seems to cling unto it, even to the end. The affections, in these cases, have early got a wrong bias, the passions an undue preponderance; and, as there are no happy recollections of early piety to be called up, the entire process must be one

of labour, of struggle, and of conflict. This may be illustrated, from what happens in the case of human accomplishments. The orator, the musician, the painter, and the poet, in order to attain ease and freedom in their several departments, must begin in their youth. If not early trained, however scientific, however distinguished they may become, a hardness and a stiffness will be found in their best performances. This analogy, the more closely it is examined, the more applicable it will be found.

But when right youthful training is unimpeded by counteracting circumstances, the result is, a calm, an easy, a cheerful, an elevated piety. A piety, of which we have the perfect pattern in Him, who "increased in wisdom, as in stature, and in favour with God and man;" and of which, the best human specimen, is, probably, the beloved disciple, Saint John. In all ages of the Church, a succession of such individuals may be traced; who exhibit religion in the most winning and attractive form; who engage us to love goodness, before we accurately know the principles on which it is founded. Such were the Chrysostoms of ancient, and the Fenelons of modern times. Men, who seem to have been pious, without intermission, from their infancy upwards; and of whose piety, — ease,

and cheerfulness, and elevation, are the leading characteristics.

But, again; there are those, who, after the blessings of early religious education, have been led astray by the temptations and allurements of the world; and who, in after life, are brought back to the love and service of their God. Those persons are not, on the one hand, harsh and austere, like the converts who have had no youthful training; nor, on the other hand, are they cheerful and elevated, like the pupils and followers of Saint John. Some serenity, indeed, and some cheerfulness, much gravity, and much occasional elevation, appear in their religion; but their grand characteristic is, the moral and spiritual depth of their principles and feelings. They have sounded the deeps of Christianity; they have experienced the miseries of sin, and practically felt the exceeding great mercy and power, of the restoring grace of God. If these men do not attract us, like Saint John, they instruct us, like Saint Paul; who, perhaps, may himself be regarded as the foremost of this class; early trained in religion; afterward led astray by vehement passions; and, at length, restored by the victorious grace of God. In this description of Christians, the efficacy of early religious education is not less striking;

than in those who have never materially wandered from the right way. When the prodigal son came to himself, he thought upon the happiness of his Father's house; he recalled the innocent recollections of his infant years. In all such cases, there is a return to past impressions. An eminent Christian, the great Saint Augustine, has left us the instructive record of his early training, his subsequent wanderings, and his final restoration. There is one inimitable passage, full of hope and consolation for anxious and afflicted parents. His excellent mother was in deep affliction for his youthful errors; in her sorrow, she consulted the good and pious Archbishop of Milan; and his reply should never be forgotten:—'Fear not, my daughter;' said the venerable Ambrose, 'it is impossible, that the child of such tears should perish.' This child, wanderer though he had been, lived to become a most distinguished object, and champion, of the converting grace of God; a disciple of the school of the converted Saint Paul, no less remarkable, than was Saint Chrysostom of the school of the beloved disciple.

The sum of the matter, then, is this: it is the ordinary course of things, that early religious training, either, under the influence of assisting grace, and favourable circumstances, will pre-

serve the subjects of it uncontaminated by the world : or, if, unhappily, from unfavourable circumstances, they are led astray, the religious feelings and principles early imbibed, will, in the end, and through the power of restoring grace, work their effect, in the repentance and recovery of the wanderers.

It remains, in conclusion, that I address you more particularly, on the occasion of the Christian and charitable contribution, which I am here for the purpose of soliciting.

There is a large class of society, which, from a combination of unhappy circumstances, is placed, as it were, beyond the pale of the provision made in the usual course of Divine providence and grace, for the early religious training of infancy and youth : those, who have never heard a father's commandment, nor responded to the law of a mother ; those, who have been exposed, almost from their birth, to the contagion of bad example, and, from the first dawn of intellect, have been tutored only in the rudiments of wickedness and vice ; those, who have been, but too assiduously, and too skilfully, formed to become criminal, almost before they have arrived at the age of moral responsibility.

For these unfortunate beings, Divine Providence has appointed one only prospect of deli-

verance from misery here and hereafter, temporal and eternal; and that prospect lies in the Christian charity of those, who, like the founders and supporters of this admirable Institution, are desirous, not only to turn confirmed sinners from the error of their way, but to rescue the young from moral contagion; to snatch them, ere they are advanced, or even entered into the career of profligacy and abandonment, from the otherwise inevitable certainty, of being corrupted themselves, and becoming the corrupters of others.

The fact of your being assembled, this day, in this place, to promote the designs of this great charity, affords the most satisfactory proof, that you feel the obligation imposed on you as Christians, and even as friends of well ordered society, to be co-operators with Almighty God, in saving, in protecting, in cherishing, those who are without natural protectors.

Yourselves blest with an early religious training, yourselves disciplined by good and pious parents, and afterwards instructed in the salutary truths, and imbued with the holy principles, of Christian faith,—you are solicitous to repay some part of the debt of gratitude contracted, for those distinguishing favours of your Benefactor and your God.

The regular mode appointed by that gracious

Parent of us all, for bringing generation after generation, to religion, to happiness, and heaven, may, we have but too many, and too lamentable proofs before our eyes, be set aside by the wickedness of man. With respect to many, it has been rendered impossible, that they shall receive from their parents, any instruction, but instruction in wickedness; from their associates, any example, but examples of hardened and incorrigible villainy. But God has other methods in reserve: and He, who is willing to receive the grey-headed sinner, even at the eleventh hour, will not reject those young wanderers, who are introduced to his vineyard, at the first or second hour of the day. Many such, this blessed Institution has been the means of bringing home; and, this day, by your Christian liberality, I trust, many more will eventually be added to the number.

You, my fellow-christians, are in the place of parents to these children; who might, and, to all human appearance, inevitably must, but for your interference, have been "outcasts from the eternal Providence." When received into this establishment, the reform of some, the first training of others, and the moral and religious institution of all, rests with those, who administer your bounty. And how conscientiously, and how effectually, this trust is discharged, may be

judged, from the success with which, under the blessing of God, their efforts have been attended. A few plain facts will, here, speak more than volumes of general panegyric. Of those who left this Asylum, in the course of eight years, fifty-three young women were placed in respectable services; and sixty-five young men completed their apprenticeships, and were qualified to earn an income fully sufficient for their creditable support. Thirty of these young men, previous to being admitted into this Establishment, had been personally engaged in criminal practices; and the remaining thirty-five were the children of convicts. Every apprentice has a weekly task assigned him, of an amount equal to two thirds of the sum which he can industriously earn. If he performs more than his task, he is allowed one half of his extra earnings: not, however, immediately; for this might prove injurious. One third of the amount is paid him weekly: the remainder is accumulated, and paid to him at the end of his apprenticeship; together with some additional rewards for good conduct. Of the sixty-five young men already mentioned, forty-three quitted the Institution, with a sum not exceeding 20*l.*; eighteen with from 20*l.* to 30*l.*; some, with from 30*l.* to 40*l.* The females, also, have received rewards, proportioned to the length of time they remained in

service. Thus, while habits of industry have been formed, the benefits of industry have been felt; the young persons have been supplied with a competent outfit, on their entrance into life; and there is good reason to feel satisfied, that the habits acquired will not be relinquished; and that the benefits obtained, will be converted into yet more solid blessings.

It is, indeed, an ascertained fact, that numbers of the persons of both sexes trained in this Asylum, are creditably and comfortably established in life. Several, have occasionally called at this Institution, to express their gratitude, for the benefits here received; and still more would follow their example, were it not for the supposed discredit, which might attach to the recollection of their earliest years, and their original unhappy condition. But it is a most gratifying circumstance, that many who were educated here, attend Divine service in this Chapel, and rejoice in contributing their mite, towards the support of an Institution, to which, under the providence and grace of God, they are indebted for every comfort of this life, and every hope and anticipation of a better. This one fact shows, that they are, not only carefully, but affectionately trained; that, not only, their minds have been disciplined, but their hearts have been won.

One word only, I will add; the multitudes received within these walls, might have been the pests of society; they are likely to become its blessings. They might have engaged others in a course of wickedness; they are likely to enlist others in an active course of goodness. They might have continued children of the wicked one; they are, we trust, the children of God, and candidates for happiness and heaven. May the Giver of all good gifts put it into your hearts, to be bountiful this day; may your contributions redound to his glory, and to the salvation of souls; and, when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed, may you enjoy the happiness of knowing, that, by your distribution of this world's goods, you have been instrumental, towards augmenting the number of blessed and immortal spirits!

DISCOURSE XII.

 DANIEL xii. 2, 3.

AND MANY OF THEM THAT SLEEP IN THE DUST OF THE EARTH SHALL AWAKE; SOME TO EVERLASTING LIFE; AND SOME TO SHAME AND EVERLASTING CONTEMPT; AND THEY THAT BE WISE, SHALL SHINE AS THE BRIGHTNESS OF THE FIRMAMENT; AND THEY THAT TURN MANY TO RIGHTEOUSNESS, AS THE STARS FOR EVER AND EVER.

IN all human pursuits, the first question that we naturally ask ourselves is, ‘What will be the end?’ (1) In business or pleasure; in active or contemplative life; in schemes of self-advancement, or in efforts to promote the happiness of others, — some distant eminence is seen in bright perspective, which we regard as the crown and consummation of our wishes. These final results are the grand movers of life; the main-springs of all social, intellectual, and moral activity. First in conception, and last in attain-

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ment, they are habitually kept in view, till the moment of completion. In every stage of the most lengthened process, they impel us to renewed exertion. In every pause of our wearied spirits, they urge us to encounter difficulties, surmount obstacles, endure hardships, each in our several spheres and degrees, but all with a similarity of reference to some future period, when toil shall cease, and when hope shall be lost in the fulness of enjoyment.

This is the universal habit of our nature. Every being who can think and act, has an end in view, which shapes the course of his life, and modifies the character of his mind. (2) The objects thus pursued, are indeed, infinitely various. The creature of vulgar instinct, never looks beyond the minute and visionary shadows of this present world: the man of moral prudence, has an easy standard of social virtue and enjoyment; but the Christian, feels that he is living for eternity, and, therefore, can repose on nothing less immutable, than the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the original and end of all things. (3) This is the supreme object; this alone, is worthy to occupy and fill the soul of an immortal being; this alone, can serve as an unerring pole-star, to guide us through the waves of a troublesome world; this alone, can lead us to the attainment

of that final blessedness, so nobly embodied in the words of the prophet, that we may awake to everlasting life; that we may shine as the brightness of the firmament; that we may be as the stars, for ever and ever!

But, though our wishes instinctively pant after this glorious consummation; though it realizes, what philosophy, in all ages, has been seeking for, "if haply she might feel after it, and find it;" though it is fully displayed in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; and, through his gracious interference, placed within our grasp, and pressed upon our acceptance, by every motive which can act upon our reason, our affections, our imagination, our hopes, and our fears; though, to every one of us, there is offered power, that we may become the children of God, heirs of everlasting life, partakers of the inheritance of the saints of light, — how few are there, that seek to have those great things realized within themselves! How few, that seriously investigate their truth, or pause, but for a single hour, to contemplate their infinite importance!

Speculative unbelief, indeed, is now happily out of fashion. To the awful and unprecedented events of these latter times,¹ we are, at least, indebted for a most portentous comment on the

¹ Written A.D. 1806.

creed of infidelity. And in this respect, the apostles of anarchy and massacre have been made preachers of righteousness, to a desolated world. But though the cavils of scepticism now seldom intermingle with our social intercourse, and the voice of profaneness less frequently wound our ears in cultivated life, can we honestly maintain, that we are yet freed from an infidelity of the heart? Can we look around us, without deploring, that many whose characters are unimpeachable of gross offence, whose stations are respectable and grave, whose demeanor is decent and decorous, whose social and civil qualities deservedly attract much public estimation, — can we avoid deploring, that such persons regard Christianity, with a sort of supercilious scorn? Its ceremonies, indeed, they treat with distant respect; for they are established, by the law of the land. To its dry generalities, they afford a cold speculative assent; for they think religion a good thing for their wives, their children, and for the lower classes of society. But, by their manner, when the strict principles, and steady pursuit of religion, are pressed upon themselves, we too plainly discover, that they despise it in their hearts. (4) “Christ crucified” was, long since, “to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness;” and so it is

to multitudes, at this very day; occupied by vain pursuits; absorbed in earthly speculations; struggling for eminence and for advancement; eager to outstrip their competitors, in the career of wealth and glory; devoted to the frivolities of time, regardless of an awful eternity (5); anxious about the trifles of to-day, forgetful that to-morrow "their dust" may "return to the earth as it was," and their "spirit" may be summoned "unto God who gave it." (6)

Let it not, however, be imagined, that we would stigmatize or depreciate the pursuits of active life. Far from us be such egregious folly! We cannot put them down, if we would; for they are interwoven with the very fibres of civil society. Divine Providence has identified them with the habits, passions, and affections, of mankind. The convictions of our judgment, the events of every hour, the wants of every moment, tell us that they must go on. And we would not put them down, if we could; for, assuredly, it would be no slight indication of growing improvement, if men were to become more diligent, more intellectual, more conversant with subjects which require patient research, comprehensive views, and long-sighted sagacity. Especially, we would not put them down, because, we are assured, that the same infinitely wise Disposer,

who, at all times, and in all places, has rendered the prominent pursuits of men, subservient to his great designs, will, doubtless, make the prevailing tastes of this our day, instrumental to the growth of knowledge, the advancement of civilization, and the progress of religion.

We cheerfully admit the value, then, of all secular pursuits, that do not trench upon the sacred principles of Christian virtue. But we cannot forget, and shame and woe must be our portion, if we do not remind our hearers, that "one thing is needful," indispensably needful. With this truth, therefore, in our view, and with its consequences in our apprehension, we do most seriously deplore, that numbers, who, in very important instances, contribute to the public welfare, are blind to their own true happiness; are devoting themselves, with more than Roman hardihood, and in a far more awful sense, and to no salutary purpose, when there is a sure and summary mode of attaining every real good that the heart of man can wish, or that his imagination can devise. For the voice of inspiration testifies, and multiplied experience strengthens our conviction, that "godliness is profitable to all things; having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

Truly, the children of this world, wise in their

own generation, are foolish in the estimate of comprehensive reason. They know not what they lose. Christianity is neither weakness, nor enthusiasm, nor superstition. It is the sublimest philosophy, realized by fact, and teaching by example. It is the unclouded perception of our ultimate end, and the vivid apprehension of the best means, through every stage of our earthly pilgrimage. It is a blessed communion with that Infinite Mind, which regulates, adjusts, and pre-disposes all things. It is a filial access to that Benevolent Parent, who withholds no good thing from the children of his love; who guides them with his counsel; who teaches them by his Spirit; who sheds his holiest influence around their guarded footsteps; and who, at the last, will receive them into heavenly mansions, prepared before the foundation of the world.

Yes; as Christians we are called to a high vocation. It is the happy peculiarity of our religion, to place its mature proficient on that serene and holy eminence (7), which philosophers and poets loved to figure to themselves, as the watch-tower of their ideal sage. Thence, the confirmed Christian surveys human nature, in its utmost height, and in its lowest degradation; from the glorious and benignant beings, that are stamped with God's own imperishable image,

to the blighted and self-ruined souls, that, even in this life, are but spirits in prison. And how does he behold them? Not with cold-hearted apathy, not with selfish pride; but, with the lively interest of a fellow-mortal, whose highest earthly bliss it is, to hold communion with the virtuous few; to strengthen the weak, to confirm the wavering, and, if possible, to rescue the victims that are rushing down the steep of ruin.

And is this the religion, and are these the dispositions, which the children of this world regard with supercilious scorn? Unhappy beings! They know not what they lose! But, if in this life they do not come to themselves, let them be assured, that, when its feverish dream is over, they shall awake to a bitter sense of their delusion; to what they now shrink from, with horror; to what they now dread, more than death; to contempt, everlasting contempt. (8) This is the unqualified, the awful declaration of Scripture: and reason and conscience bear testimony, that the record is true. For, what, indeed, can be more contemptible, than moral agents who have, all their life, been wasting infinite capacities, on objects, not merely finite in their nature, but which sages and poets (9), no less than prophets and apostles, have uniformly characterized as a shadow, a vapour, a smoke that vanisheth? What can be

more contemptible, than beings, fitted to trace the finger of God, in the benign magnificence of nature, and to experience the grace of God, in the renovation of their whole body, soul, and spirit, who, by a voluntary degradation, have not only neglected, but despised, those great things which angels desire to look into? And despised them for what? Why, for the straws and bubbles that are floating down the troubled waters of vanity. (10) What, in a word, can be more utterly contemptible, than spirits, formed for eternal union with their Maker, who have wilfully fixed their own doom; who are immortal, only in their pride, their pravity, their guilt, and their despair!

But, beloved, may I not hope better things of you, and things that accompany salvation? Yes; it is my hope, that there are those amongst you, qualified by obvious excellence, to shine as lights of the world; and it is my persuasion, that there are also those, whose modest, unobtrusive virtues, act upon society, like the secret sources of a great river, noiseless in their progress, but mighty in their confluence. But are these enough? No, my brethren; it is my heart's desire, that not only these, but all who hear me this day, were not only almost, but altogether Christians! That you were all ani-

mated as with one heart, and with one soul, to renounce the wisdom which is earthly, sensual, devilish ; which can only minister to your vanity, inflame your pride, and heap fuel on your worst and meanest passions ! That you were all divinely taught, to substitute in its room, that wisdom from above, which is pure, peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated ; which alone, can cheer you at the hour of death ; which alone, can shield you in the hour of judgment ; which alone, can protect you from shame and everlasting contempt, when they that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, and heaven and earth shall pass away ! Then, how tranquil would be your enjoyment of this present life, how glorious your anticipation of the life to come ! “ They that be wise,” it is God himself who declares it, “ shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever ! ” (11)

And does not this lovely picture of future blessedness awaken feelings within you, which outweigh an eternity of worldly pleasure ? It surely must, if you know what it is to relish, the sublime and beautiful of nature : if ever you have delighted to look upon God’s heavens, the work of his fingers, the moon and the stars which He hath ordained : if ever, in the silence of the

night, without any witness but that supreme Intelligence unto whom all hearts be open, you have contemplated the mild grandeur of the universe, and said, "This is none other, than the house of God: and this is the gate of heaven!" All that you then beheld; all that you then imagined; all that then elevated and soothed your best affections, was but the faint image, the feeble dawning of eternal pleasure. The brightness of the firmament may, indeed, represent the lustre of a glorified body; but it is far outshone, by the brightness of a renovated soul. What is visible and material, can but inadequately illustrate the purity, the peace, and joy, of a departed spirit, enrolled among the denizens of that city, 'whose King is truth, whose law is love, whose measure is eternity' (12); of a deathless soul, associated with the innumerable company of angels, united with the spirits of just men made perfect, introduced into the presence of God, the judge of all, and hailed with gratulation, by Him who is seated far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, on the throne of everlasting glory. This is, indeed, a blessedness, which the tongue of men and angels cannot speak, which none, but purified and immortal eyes can behold (13); which none, but seraphic minds can apprehend; which none, but Godlike

dispositions can enjoy. For, be assured, that the society of glorified spirits, and the hymns of cherubim and seraphim, and the visible presence of Almighty God, would, in themselves, be utterly insufficient to make us happy. No, my brethren ! Happiness must dawn within ourselves ; the light of heaven must illuminate our own hearts ; the love of God must clarify the temper of our inmost souls. The impure, the unholy, the uncharitable spirit, if admitted into heaven, would wish, like the obscure bird of night, for its congenial darkness. (14) It would feed on the silent anguish of a tormented, and tormenting conscience ; without pause, without intermission, without hope. It would sink, by its own gravitation, to that reality of hell, to that ever-present retribution, which wickedness inflicts upon herself. Amuse not yourselves, therefore, with splendid visions of an outward heaven : but rather seek, and strive, and pray, that you may be given to possess heaven within ; in the righteousness of a Godlike mind, in the peace of an approving conscience, in the joy which this world cannot give, and cannot take away. These would, truly, make you fit associates for the blessed company above : these, constituting the very essence of yourselves, would cleave inseparably to your being. (15) These, by rendering you dif-

fusive, and effectual instruments of good, would prepare you for a richer crown, and raise you to a loftier seat, in the many mansions of our Father. One star differeth from another star, in glory; so shall it be, also, in the resurrection of the dead. "They that be wise," indeed, "shall shine as the brightness of the firmament:" but "they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever."

"They that turn many to righteousness." And what truly good man has ever failed to participate, in this blessed office? Goodness is the strongest and most operative principle upon earth. It has God in its favour; it has God within itself. "If a man love me," saith our Divine Redeemer, "he will keep my words; and my Father will love him; and we will come unto him; and make our abode with him." And who, that has God abiding in his heart and mind, can want either inclination or ability, to communicate the peace which reigns within him? Sooner shall Satan quench the sun-beams in their course, and plunge the material universe in darkness, than extinguish those holy emanations of a Godlike spirit, which diffuse light, and liberty, and joy, throughout the spiritual system. The good man is, in truth, a universal blessing. Out of the abundance of his heart, his mouth will

speak ; and how powerful are the words of truth,
 and soberness, and charity ? When his lips are
 silent, his life itself will speak ; and how ope-
 rative is the energy of a good example ? Great
 and splendid talents, dignified and exalted station,
 will, indeed, occasionally, both extend and illus-
 trate the triumphs of Christian virtue. In the
 divine economy there are chosen vessels, ordained
 to special purposes, and destined to peculiar
 glory. But true goodness, in whomsoever she
 resides, is communicative, is influential, is divinely
 efficacious ; if not as “ the light of the world,”
 at least, as “ the salt of the earth :” if not as
 the majestic waters of the Nile, at least, as the
 silent and refreshing dews of heaven. Yes, my
 brethren ! When the morning of eternity shall
 dawn : when the curtains of the grave shall be
 thrown aside : when they who sleep in the dust
 of the earth shall awake : then shall many
 whose virtues have, in this life, been hid beneath
 their own humility, shine forth as the sun, in the
 kingdom of their Father : then shall many be
 accounted at the divine estimate of their con-
 duct, and at the exceeding greatness of their
 reward. then shall the righteous answer saying,
 “ Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed
 thee ? or thirst, and gave thee drink ? When
 saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in ? or

naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer, and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Gracious words of our Redeemer, ye are, assuredly, the words of eternal life! And in that day, ye shall be verified, beyond the reach of human thought! It is not, indeed, for mortal eyes to pierce the veil of futurity. But revelation affords us a glimpse of that glorified assembly; and, who can doubt, that, of those great multitudes, which no man can number, many shall cast their crowns before the throne, and say, 'Lord, whom have we converted from the error of their ways? Whom have we turned unto righteousness? Whom have we led into the way of peace?' Humble and holy spirits, you have converted many from sin, by the undeviating strictness of your lives; you have turned many to righteousness, by the unassuming gentleness of wisdom; you have guided many to the way of peace, by treading in the footsteps of your meek and lowly Saviour. Your words, your looks, your whole demeanor and deportment, are written in the book of God's remembrance. That seed of piety, which

you so early implanted in your children, and, watered with so many tears, and cherished with so many prayers and supplications, has produced fruit an hundred and a thousand fold. The calm and cheerful devotion of your family circle, 'has left a relish and a fragrancy behind' (16), which shall ascend, with still increasing sweetness, to the paradise above. Your children, and your children's children, to the latest generation, shall arise and call you blessed. And, in the assembly of the first-born are those, who shall ascribe it to your parental assiduity and love, that they learned to study the Scriptures, and be wise; to commune with their own hearts, and be still (17); to acquaint themselves with God, and be at peace!

Now, to the King, immortal, eternal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour, glory, and praise for ever and ever! Amen.

NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

(1) Page 241.] Ὑβρίζει ἑαυτην ἢ του ἀνθρώπου ψυχη, ὅταν πρᾶξιν τινα ἑαυτης καὶ ὄρμην, ἐπ' οὐδενᾶ σκοπον ἀφίη, ἀλλὰ εἰκη, καὶ ἀπαρακούουθητος ὅτιουν ἐνεργῇ. δεόν καὶ τὰ μικροτάτα, κατὰ τὴν ἐπὶ το τέλος ἀναφορὰν γινεσθαι.—Marc. Anton. ii. 16.

Εἴθισον ἐπὶ παντός, ὥς οἶοντε, τοῦ πρᾶσσομένου ὑπο τίνος, ἐπιζητεῖν κατὰ σαυτον, οὗτος τοῦτο ἐπὶ τίνα φερεῖ; ἀρχοῦ δε ἀπο σαυτον, καὶ σαυτον πρῶτον ἐξετάζε.—Marc. Anton. x. 37.

Δεῖ ἅπαντα τὸν δυναμένον ζῆν κατὰ τὴν αὐτοῦ προαιρεσιν, θεσθαί τινα σκοπον τοῦ καλῶς ζῆν, πρὸς ὃν ἀποβλεπῶν, ποιησεται πᾶσας τὰς πράξεις. ὥς το γέ μὴ συντεταχθαι τὸν βίον πρὸς τι τέλος, ἀφροσύνης πολλῆς σημεῖον ἐστὶ.—Arist. Ethic. ad Eudem. Lib. i. 2.

Καὶ τοὶ τίνα εἶχει λόγον, κυβερνητὴν μὲν οὐκ εἰκὴ τοῖς πνεύμασιν ἐφιεῖναι, ἀλλὰ πρὸς ὁρμούς ἐυθυνεῖν τὸ σκάφος· καὶ τοξοτὴν κατὰ σκοποῦ βαλλεῖν· καὶ μὴ δὴ καὶ χαλκευτικὸν τίνα, ἡ τεκτονικὸν οὐκ αὖτὴν κατὰ τὴν τέχνην ἐφιεσθῆναι τέλους· ἡμᾶς δὲ καὶ τῶν τοιούτων δημιουργῶν ἀπολείπεσθαι, πρὸς γὰρ τὸ συνορτὴν δύνασθαι τὰ ἡμέτερα; οὐ γὰρ δὴ τῶν χειρωνακτῶν ἐστὶ πέρας, τοῦ δὲ ἀνθρωπίνου βίου σκοπὸς οὐκ ἐστὶ; πρὸς ὃν ἀφορῶντα πάντα ποιεῖν καὶ λέγειν χρὴ, τὸν γὰρ μὴ τοῖς ἀλογοῖς προσεοικέναι μέλλοντα. ἡ οὕτως ἀν εἰμὲν ἀτεχνῶς κατὰ τῶν πλοίων τὰ ἀνερματιστά, οὐδενός ἡμῖν νοῦ ἐπὶ τῶν τῆς ψυχῆς οἰακῶν καθέζομενον, εἰκὴ κατὰ τὸν βίον ἀνω καὶ κατω περιφερομενοί.—S. Basil. Hom. xxiv. p. 578. A.

(2) Page 242.] Πλουτοῦν ἡ δοῦναι ἕκαστος αὐτῶν σκοποῦν προτεθειμένος, ἐπὶ τούτῳ ὥσπερ βέλῃ, τὰς τοῦ βίου πράξεις ἀπάσας ἀφίησι.—Philo. Jud. de Confus. Linguar. p. 327. A.

(3) Page 242.] 'Surely, there is a possibility of somewhat, which may fill up all our capacities of happiness; somewhat, in which our souls may find rest; somewhat, which may be to us that satisfactory good we are inquiring after. But it cannot be any thing which is valuable only as it tends to some further end. Those, therefore, who have got this world so much into their hearts as not to be able to consider happiness as consisting in any thing but property and possessions, which are only valuable as the means to somewhat else, cannot have the least glimpse of the subject before us; which is *THE END, NOT THE MEANS*; the thing itself, not somewhat in order to it.'—Bishop Butler. Sermon on Love of God, p. 302.

'If there be an ultimate end of all human pursuits, an end desirable merely in itself, (and unless there be such an end, desire, proceeding to infinity, will terminate in a baseless vision,) this ultimate end must be what is called good; and of goods, *THE BEST*.'—Aristotle. Nichomachian Ethics. Book i. Chap. 2. Gillies' Translation.

Εστι δε και πασαις ὁμον τελος ἐν εσχατον, δι' ὃ τα των αλλων τελη ζητουνται, και ουκ εστιν εκεινο δι' αλλο, αλλ' αυτο δι' εαυτο.—Andronic. Rhod. Paraph. Lib. i. cap. i. p. 3.

Ει δε το τελος ἐν τι ειναι, αλλ' ου πολλα, δει (οὕτω γαρ αν ου ΤΕΛΟΣ, αλλα ΤΕΛΗ, αν ζητοι) εκεινο χρη λαμβανειν μονον, ὃ εσχατον τε εστι, και τιμιωτατον, και ὃ ἡ ψυχη ζητει εν αυτη εγκολπισασθαι.—Plotini Ennead. I. Lib. iv. § 6. p. 33.

Εστι δε ΤΟ ΑΓΑΘΟΝ, εις ὃ παντα ανηρτηται, και οὐ παντα τα οντα επιεται, αρχην εχοντα αυτο, κακεινον δεομενα. το δε εστιν ανεδεες, ικανον εαυτω, μηδενος δεομενον, μετρον παντων και περας, δους εξ αυτου, νουν, και ουσιαν, και ψυχην, και περι νουν ενεργειαν.—Ennead. I. Lib. viii. § 2. p. 72.

(4) Page 244.] 'Methinks men should be ashamed to profess the belief of a life to come, while they cannot behold without indignation, nor mention but with derision, that holiness without which it can never be attained, and which

is, indeed, the seed and principle of the thing itself.'—John Howe. Preface to the 'Blessedness of the Righteous.'

(5) Page 245.] *Asperum jugum, et duræ servitutis pondus est, subesse temporalibus; ambire terrena; retinere labentia; velle stare in non stantibus; appetere quidem transeuntia, sed cum transeuntibus nolle transire.*—S. Gregor. Moral. in Job. Lib. xxx. cap. xii. p. 776.

'How preposterous a course were it, and unworthy of a man, should he prefer the momentary pleasures of narrow, incapacious sense, to the everlasting enjoyments of an enlarged, comprehensive spirit!'—John Howe. Blessed. of Right. p. 448.

(6) Page 245.] *Συνεκριθη, και διεκριθη, και απηλθεν οθεν ηλθε παλιν, γα μεν εις γαν, πνευμα δ' ανω.*—Epicharm. ap. Plutarch. Consol. ad Apollon. Oper. Mor. a Wyttenb. Tom. i. p. 435.

— πνευμα μεν προς αιθερα,
Το σωμα δ' εις γην.

Euripides. Supplic.

Cedit item retro, de terra quod fuit ante
In terras; et quod missum est ex ætheris oris,
Id rursum cœli relatum templa receptant.

Lucretius. Lib. ii. 996—8.

(7) Page 247.]

Sed nil dulcius est, bene quam munita tenere
Edita doctrinâ sapientum templa serena;
Despicere unde queas alios, passimque videre
Errare, atque viam palanteis quærere vitæ;
Certare ingenio; contendere nobilitate;
Noctes atque dies niti præstante labore,
Ad summas emergere opes, rerumque potiri.

Lucretius. Lib. ii. 7—13.

(9) Page 248.] Οὕτως γὰρ συνεχῶς θεασθ' τα ἀνθρώπινα, καπνον, καὶ τὸ μῆδεν.—Marc. Antonin. x. 31; also xii. 33. ii. 17.

So Æschylus on human life :—

Καὶ πιστὸν οὐδὲν μᾶλλον, ἢ καπνὸν σκία.

and Sophocles :—

Ὅρω γὰρ ἡμᾶς οὐδὲν ὄντας ἄλλο, πλὴν

Εἰδῶλ', ὅσοι περ ζῶμεν, ἢ κουφὴν σκίαν. 1. 125.

and Saint James :—

Ποία γὰρ ἡ ζωὴ ὑμῶν; αἰμις γὰρ ἐστίν, ἢ πρὸς ὀλίγον φαεινομένη, εἰπεῖτα δὲ ἀφανιζομένη.—S. James, iv. 14. Compare Psalm xxxix. 7., cxliv. 4., and Wisdom ii. 2—5.

(10) Page 249.] Fluvius, levius atque inflata ad nos devehit, solida autem, et pondus habentia, submergit.—Bacon. de Augment. Scient. Lib. i. p. 82.

(11) Page 250.] Aliquando naturæ tibi arcana reteguntur, discutietur ista caligo, et lux undique clara percutiet. Imaginare tecum, quantus ille sit fulgor, tot sideribus inter se lumen miscentibus. Nulla serenum umbra turbabit; æqualiter splendebit omne cœli latus; dies et nox, ærīs infimi vices sunt. Tunc in tenebris vixisse dices, cum totam lucem totus adspexeris, quam nunc, per angustissimas oculorum vias, obscure intueris, et tamen admiraris tam procul. Quid tibi videbitur divina lux, cum illam suo loco videris? Hæc cogitatio nihil sordidum animo subsidere sinit, nihil humile, nihil crudele. Deos omnium rerum esse testes ait, illis nos approbari, illis in futurum parari jubet, et æternitatem proponere; quam qui mente concepit, nullos horret exercitus, non terretur turbæ, nullis ad timorem minis agitur. Quid ni non timeat, qui mori sperat.—Seneca. Epistol. cii, p. 510.

(12) Page 251.] *Cives alterius civitatis, cujus rex veritas, cujus lex charitas, cujus modus æternitas.*—S. Augustin. *ad Marcellin. ep. cxxxviii. cap. iii. § 17.*

(13) Page 251.] Ἡ δὲ τῶν ἀφθαρτῶν σωματῶν δοξα οὐ τοσούτον ἀφίησι τὸ φῶς, ὅσον τὸ σῶμα τούτου φθαρτὸν, οὐδὲ τοιοῦτον, οἷον καὶ θνητοῖς ὁμμασι γενεσθαι χωρητὸν, ἀλλ' ἀφθαρτῶν καὶ ἀθανατῶν δεομένον ὀφθαλμῶν πρὸς τὴν θεῶν αὐτοῦ.—S. Chrysost. *ad Theodor. laps. Disc. ii. p. 71. Op. Tom. vi, edit. Savil.*

Τούτῳ κείται νόμος, μίμεισθαι τὸν πλαστὴν εἰς δύναμιν, καὶ τὴν ἐν οὐρανοῖς εὐταξίαν σκιαγραφεῖν ἐπὶ γῆς.—καὶ τὰς ἀρετὰς δὲ, ἡμετέρα κτήματα γενομένα, εὐροῖ τις αὐ, ὅταν ἐξ ἐπιμελείας συνυφανθῶσι τῇ φύσει. καὶ οὐτε ἐπὶ γῆς μοχθοντάς ἡμᾶς ἀπολιμπανεῖν ἐθέλουσιν (ἣν μὴ πρὸς βίαν αὐτὰς ἔκοντες ἀποδιώξωμεν ταῖς τῶν χειρῶν ἐπαγωγαῖς) ἐκείσε τε ἐπείγουμένων προτρέχουσι, καὶ τοῖς ἀγγέλοις τὸν κησαμένον συνταπτοῦσι, καὶ λαμπουσι δι' αἰῶνος ὑπὸ τοῖς τοῦ κτισαντος ὀφθαλμοῖς.—S. Basil. *Hom. xxiii. p. 560. D. 561. A.*

(14) Page 252.] Τα ἀγαθὰ ἐξ ἡμῶν ζητεῖτε· ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ζητεῖτε.—Epictet. *Lib. iii. cap. xxiv. p. 344,*

‘It is not a *χωριστον*, but a *κτητον* τι: not any thing separate from the soul, but something it possesses, that can make it happy. It is not happy by an incommunicate happiness, nor glorious by an incommunicate glory. Indeed, the discovery of such a glory to an inglorious, unholy soul, must rather torment than satisfy.’—Howe’s *Blessedness*, Chap. i. p. 453.

‘Conscience, undoubtedly, is the great repository and magazine of all those pleasures that can afford any solid refreshment to the soul. For when this is calm and serene, then, properly, a man enjoys all things,—and, what is more, *himself*; for that he must do before he can enjoy any thing else.’—South. *Sermon on Proverbs iii. 17.*

‘In vain do we dream of happiness in any thing without

us. Happiness must be within us. The foundation of it must be laid in the inward frame and disposition of our spirits. And the very same causes and ingredients which make up the happiness of God must be found in us, though in a much inferior degree, or we cannot be happy. They understand not the nature of happiness who hope for it upon any other terms. He who is the author and fountain of happiness cannot convey it to us in any other way, than by planting in us such dispositions of mind as are, in truth, a kind of participation of the Divine nature, and by enduing us with such qualities as are the necessary materials of happiness. And a man may as soon be well without health, as happy without goodness.

'If a wicked man were taken up to heaven, yet, if he still continue the same bad man that he was before, *celum non animum mutavit*; he may have changed the climate, and gone into a far country; but, because he carries *himself* still along with him, he will still be miserable from himself. For a bad man hath a fiend in his own breast, and the fuel of hell in his guilty conscience.'—Archbishop Tillotson. Vol. i. Sermon. 41. p. 486.

(15) Page 252.] 'A palsy may as well shake an oak, or a fever dry up a fountain, as either of them shake, dry up, or impair, the delight of conscience. For it lies within; it centres in the heart; it grows into the very substance of the soul: so that it accompanies a man to his grave; he never outlives it; and that for this cause only, because he cannot outlive himself.—South. on Proverbs iii. 17.

These are truly what Saint Basil calls,—*πεφυκοτα τοις ανθρωποις οικειουσθαι καταπαζ*,—*συγχωρουμενα δια της στενης εκεινης πυλης ακολουθησαι τοις εχουσιν*,—*α μεν ημιν ενωθηναι και κοσμος οντως γενεσθαι δυναται, συμφυης ψυχη τε και σωματα*.—S. Basil. Hom. xxiii. p. 558. C.

(16) Page 256.] 'They are gone, but have left a relish

and a fragrance upon the mind, and the remembrance of them is sweet.'—Bishop Horne. Preface to the Psalms. Works. Vol. II. p. lx.

(17) Page 256.] 'Those gentle whispers of the Spirit, *venæ divini murmuris*, as Prudentius calls them; those inward manifestations of God, are best discerned and attended to in this solemn silence. When the wind is high, and beats upon the windows and doors of the house, it is hard to hear what is said within. All tumultuous passions must be calmed, and the soul be in a state of due stillness and tranquillity, to hear what God speaks to it.'—Worthington on Self-resignation. Part I. chap. iv. p. 34.

'Loqui de Deo, *quietæ valde et liberæ mentis est*: Tunc namque bene lingua dirigitur in sermone, cum secure sensus quieverit in tranquillitate: quia nec concussa aqua imaginem respicientis reddit; sed tunc in eâ vultus intendentis aspicitur, cum non movetur.'—S. Gregor. Magn. in Ezech. Lib. I. Hom. ii. p. 1125.

'So, when a smooth expanse receives imprest
Calm nature's image on its watery breast,
Down bend the banks, the trees depending grow,
And skies beneath with answering colours glow:
But, if a stone the gentle sea divide,
Swift ruffling circles curl on every side;
And glimmering fragments of a broken sun,
Banks, trees, and skies in thick disorder run.'

Parnel's Hermit.

DISCOURSE XIII.

JEREMIAH ii. 13.

FOR MY PEOPLE HAVE COMMITTED TWO EVILS ;
THEY HAVE FORSAKEN ME, THE FOUNTAIN OF LIVING
WATERS ;
AND HEWED THEM OUT CISTERNS, BROKEN CISTERNS,
THAT CAN HOLD NO WATER.

IN the portion of Scripture from which these words are taken, God expostulates with his people Israel, for their ungrateful disregard of his past and present bounties, and for their attachment to the idolatries of other nations. He contrasts their base desertion of Jehovah, their true strength and glory, with the persevering constancy of the heathen, in the worship of their false unprofitable gods :

Pass over to the isles of Chittim, and see,
And send unto Kedar, and consider diligently ;
And see, if there be such a thing :

Hath a nation changed her Gods, which yet are no Gods ?
But my people have changed their glory, for that which
doth not profit.

This strong poetic language indicates, at once, the singularity, and the atrocity, of the crime complained of. The view is first darted westward, to the shores of the Mediterranean; then eastward, over the plains of Arabia; and no such apostasy being found in either direction, the powers of nature are called upon to testify their indignation :

Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly
afraid ;
Be ye very desolate, saith Jehovah :
For my people have committed two evils ;
They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters ;
And hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can
hold no water.

The Almighty here calls himself “ the fountain of living waters ” ; an image no less just, than it is beautiful ; for, from its diversified benefits, this common element is fit to represent its divine Author. Water is not only the basis of all other fluids, but is itself the life-conveying fluid of nature. The water of a running fountain is impregnated with the purest air, and has a spirit and a virtue, by which it gives freshness and

beauty to vegetables, strength and vigour to animals, comfort and healthfulness to man; enriching the soil from whence we are nourished, and purifying the atmosphere which we breathe. And hence, perhaps, it was, that, with misjudging gratitude, the heathen attributed a mysterious sanctity, and even a divine power, to this precious gift of God. 'We venerate,' says one of them, 'the sources of mighty rivers; we erect altars to the torrents, that suddenly gush from secret caverns; we worship the fountains of tepid waters.'¹ An idolatry, which, though it most unwarrantably substituted the creature for the creator, the gift for the giver, yet still, may help to prove, that, in characterizing himself as a living fountain, God was pleased to meet a natural, and common feeling of mankind.

But this imagery was particularly suited to the inhabitants of a sultry climate; and, to the Jews, it must have presented a lively image of the sufferings, and the relief, experienced by their fathers, in the long-protracted march from Egypt, when, during the space of forty years, they traversed a wilderness, vast, desert, sandy, and parched by the sun; which, in this very

¹ Seneca. Epist. xli. p. 142. Elz. 1672.

remonstrance, the prophet calls "a land that no man passed through, and where no man dwelt."

In the lapse of ages, this region has undergone but little change; and the descriptions given of it by modern travellers, at once illustrate, and establish, the accuracy of the sacred writers: 'On the first day of our setting out,' says an intelligent writer of our own time, 'we filled thirty water-skins from the river Nile, but which, we thought, might prove little enough, till we reached the next watering-place. We travelled fifty-four miles further, before we found, three days after, a spring at which we could procure a fresh supply; and this was a new discovery, for which we were indebted to a very particular accident. It was not till the following day, that we arrived at the valley where the guides expected to water the camels; the spring was seventy-nine miles from the place where we set out. The next spring was one hundred and seventy-four miles from the last; and not met with, till the seventh day after. The sight of a spring of water was inexpressibly agreeable to our eyes, which had so long been strangers to so refreshing an object. We lost, however, the greatest part of the day, at the spring where we watered our camels. But two of them could drink at a time; and it was six

hours before the whole number, which amounted to forty-eight, were watered. Each camel takes a quarter of an hour to quench his thirst; and, at such a place as this, to water a common caravan of four hundred camels, would require two days, and two nights.’¹

This very wilderness was passed by the children of Israel: not a common caravan, but a body of six hundred and fifty thousand men able to bear arms, besides women, youths, and children, and very many cattle.² The difficulties of such a march, through such a country, must, humanly speaking, have been insuperably great; and it was quite impossible, that, by natural means, these multitudes could have had a sufficient supply of water. But they were not forsaken by their God. With Him, that was easy, which, with man, was impracticable; that which nature failed to furnish, he supplied by daily miracle. “They thirsted not, when He

¹ Eyles Irwin. Travels, as quoted in Burder’s Oriental Literature, vol. ii. p. 137.

² Exodus xij. 37, 38. Numbers i. 45—47. ii. 32, 33. The numbers of the children of Israel, from 20 years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war, were 603,550; exclusive of the tribe of Levi; and, taking this tribe, as to number, at the average of the rest, we shall have a force of more than 650,000 grown men.

led them through the deserts: He caused the waters to flow forth from them; He clave the rock also, and the waters gushed out." And, at length "He brought them into a good land; a land of brooks of waters; of fountains, and depths, that spring out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig-trees, and pomegranates; a land wherein they did eat bread without scarceness, and did not lack any thing in it."

How fitly, then, when expostulating with this people, did the Almighty style himself, "a fountain of living waters?" How could his past bounties, his present kindnesses, and his future mercies, be more suitably described, than as so many streams and rivulets, flowing from the well of life? Such imagery speaks to the heart, and the heart instinctively replies. Its beauty has ever been admired, by those most capable of judging; and its fitness to embody and illustrate the happiest feelings of devotion, would be unquestionable, if no other portion of Scripture remained to us, than the single book of Psalms. In all circumstances, David turns to his Maker, as the perpetual well-spring of joy and consolation. In the season of quiet and tranquillity, how does he express his happiness? "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want:

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; He leadeth me beside the still waters." When chased and hunted through the mountains, by the unnatural Absalom, how does he give vent to his sorrows? "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God." When wandering in the wilderness of Judah, and hiding in the caves of the wild goats, how does he seek comfort for his soul? "O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee! My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee, in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is." And, when he describes the present peace, and anticipates the future blessedness, of the righteous, the same images present themselves, diversified and enlivened by new beams of the divine goodness: "How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings: They shall be satisfied with the plenteousness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures: For, with thee is the fountain of life; in thy light, shall we see light."

It would have been happy for the Jews, if they had cultivated and cherished piety of this description. But, while they obeyed the letter, they neglected the spirit of their law. Amidst

the maintenance of their phenomenal observances, they omitted the worship of the heart. And what was the consequence? These circumstances were as long as to put in their perverted state and the land of their fathers not elevated for their joy and growing sinners. "They were after their gods to serve them: they said to a stock, thou art my father: and to a stone, thou hast begotten me." But these, their alleged idols, were unable to support them in the time of trouble. The heavy hand of the Almighty was upon them: happy if even then they had known the things which belonged unto their peace. But they would not return and repent. In vain were they smitten, for they received no correction. "Their kings, their princes, their priests, and their prophets," were all involved in the common apostasy; and, "according to the number of their cities was the number of their gods." Thus it was, that they "committed two evils." First, "they forsook the Fountain of Living Waters," that unbought, ready happiness, which flowed more freely than their wishes: and, secondly, with cost and difficulty, "they hewed them out cisterns," in which, at the best, water must have soon grown feculent and impure; "broken cisterns, that could hold no water," that only

mocked their thirst, and cheated them even of that miserable comfort which they looked for.

Such is the melancholy history of God's chosen, but rebellious people. The sequel of it, is but too well known. Their house is left unto them desolate. Scattered over the face of the earth, they are a reproach, and a bye-word among the nations. And, at this day, the traveller beholds that ruin of the Holy Land, which, in his prophetic vision, Jeremiah has shadowed forth, as a return of the whole frame of nature, to its original chaos and confusion :—

I beheld the earth, and lo, it was without form, and void ;
And the heavens, and they had no light :
I beheld the mountains, and lo, they trembled ;
And all the hills moved lightly :
I beheld, and lo, there was no man ;
And all the birds of the heavens were fled :
I beheld, and lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness ;
And all the cities thereof were broken down :
At the presence of Jehovah, and by his fierce anger ;
For thus hath Jehovah said, The whole land shall be
desolate ' !

To us, my brethren, the fate of the Jews may afford matter of serious and profitable thought : not in the way of proud comparison, but with a view to close examination of ourselves, whether we, too, may not be guilty of their offences,

¹ Jerem. iv. 23—27.

with little to excuse, and with much to aggravate our delinquency. It is our Lord's own saying, that to whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required; and, on this ground, it will be our wisdom to beware, lest the men of Judah shall rise up in judgment against the men of this generation, and condemn it. For, certainly, if we, in any shape, forsake our God, and chuse out other gods for ourselves, the measure of our guilt, and the severity of our punishment, will rise, in proportion to the opportunities which we abuse, and the talents which we misemploy.

The Jews, indeed, were deeply criminal; and grievous is the penalty, which they and their children have been forced to pay. But, if we prove alike criminal, how much more grievous penalty, think you, shall await us? They forsook their God; and, to this day, as a nation, they are outcasts from his presence. But, if we forsake our God, shall it not, in the day of judgment, be more tolerable for them, than for us? The crime is proportionate to the benefits received: the more kind and bountiful the master, the more worthless and inexcusable that wicked servant, who forsakes him. On this principle, then, let us, for a moment, compare ourselves with the Jews,

The Jews were under what is called, a temporal dispensation. That is, by a particular Providence, rewards and punishments were dealt out to them, in this present world, according to their obedience, or disobedience, to the Divine law. And, so long as they were obedient, they were the most flourishing and prosperous nation of the earth. But, even in worldly prosperity, they are not to be compared with us. We, of this age and country, enjoy more security, greater freedom from revolution, arts more diversified, knowledge more extensive, higher civilization, and ampler provision for all the wants, comforts, and elegancies, of social and domestic life. In this respect, therefore, more has been given to us, than was given to the Jews.

But Christians live under a spiritual dispensation. It is not the principle of the Gospel, that worldly prosperity, and worldly adversity, are dealt forth to them precisely according to their merits, or demerits. Good men are often outwardly poor and afflicted; wicked men are often outwardly rich and flourishing. And, though it be a great and unquestionable fact, that the just and good, and they alone, are truly happy, that the unjust and wicked, and they alone, are truly miserable, yet still, it is to inward and spiritual blessedness that we must

look, as the distinguishing privilege of all faithful Christians. And here lies our unspeakable advantage. The Jews had but the shadow; all true Christians have the substance. They had only the faint twilight of the yet unrisen Sun of Righteousness, but the Day-spring from on high hath visited us, in its meridian splendour, happy, if by our own consent, it minister light to our minds, and warmth to our hearts. The Jews had but a secret stream of spiritual influences, which held a silent, subterranean course, bubbling up, every now and then, through the writings of the prophets; but Christians are invited to the full, clear, perennial current of Divine truth and love, visible, open, and accessible to all. "He that cometh to me," saith our blessed Lord, "shall never hunger; and he that believeth in me, shall never thirst: but the water that I will give him, shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life." These are words of deeper import, than men are commonly aware of. They represent Christianity as an inward spiritual influence; effectual, not only to make us good, but to make us happy. Their entire meaning, no man can expect to comprehend in this world. It is not till everlasting life is fully attained, that the course of preparation for it can be thoroughly

understood. "Now we know" but "in part; but, when that which is perfect is come, then," and not sooner, "that which is in part, shall be done away." Meantime, we may infer this, at least, from our Redeemer's words, that whoever so believes, and so feels, the divine truths of the Gospel, the life, the precepts, the example, the divinity, the humanity, the sufferings, the death, the resurrection, the ascension of our Master, and only Saviour, Jesus Christ, as to have recourse to them, at all times, and under all circumstances, will find them productive of a refreshment, a purification, an inward strength, that will set him above the temptations and calamities of this present world, and will gradually make him meet, to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light.

But this view should be somewhat more fully opened. The truth is, then, that, in Christianity, and in Christianity alone, we see the sublimity of Godhead united with all the innocent infirmities of man. We see our Creator, assuming that nature, which Himself had made; becoming the Captain, or Leader of our salvation, by first opening that path, which we also are to tread; making Himself perfect by sufferings, first, that He may, thereby, offer a full sacrifice for sin, and, then, that He may become, to his faithful followers, a

source of life, and strength, and consolation. We see Him exposed to the same dangers, assailed by the same enemies, and subject to the same wants and privations, with the humblest of his followers. We see Him surrendering his body to the death of the cross, and dismissing, for a time, his spotless soul to the world of departed spirits, that He may redeem us from the powers of death and hell, and make us heirs of life eternal. We see Him rising from the tomb, ascending into heaven, sitting at the right hand of God, making intercession for all who come to the Father through Him, and, according to his own gracious promise, pouring down the influences of that Holy Spirit, which is to guide, direct, and sanctify, his universal Church, and all the faithful members of it, until the consummation of all things. And the tranquillizing, as well as the strengthening influence of these facts, on every heart which God hath touched, though it can be duly appreciated only by those in whom it is divinely operative, may, in some measure, be collected from that matchless apostrophe of Saint Paul, pronounced, not in his own name merely, but in the name of all those, who, with him, and like him, were followers of God:—
“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or

famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword,—nay, in all these things, we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us. For, I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

More, therefore, incomparably more, has been given to us, than was given to the Jews : and shall not more be required at our hands ? It is the rule of everlasting equity, that there must and will. Let us, then, see to it, ere it be too late, how we are prepared to meet this emergency. “ God manifest in the flesh,” is infinitely to the mind, what a fountain of living waters is to the body. From Him, to the heart of every humble, pious Christian, is conveyed a well-spring of inward life ; a supply of pure thoughts, peaceable tempers, holy desires, good counsels,—which make that Christian happy in himself, and a source of happiness to others. How far may we venture to hope, that this, in any good degree, is the case with us ? How far, that it is beginning so to be ? Such questions, ‘ it is very meet, right, and our bounden duty,’ that we should often put to ourselves ; for it is most

certain, that not all who profess and call themselves Christians, are Christians in deed and in truth ; and, in this matter, it is indispensable, that, according to the Apostolic rule, we “ examine ourselves, whether we be in the faith, and prove our own selves.” “ He is not a Jew,” saith Saint Paul, “ who is one outwardly ; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew, who is one inwardly ; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God.” Now, if we change but two words in this declaration, if we substitute *Christian* for Jew, and *baptism*, for circumcision, we may pronounce, with equal truth, that, ‘ he is not a *Christian*, who is one outwardly ; neither is that *baptism*, which is outward in the flesh. But he is a *Christian*, who is one inwardly ; and *baptism* is that of the heart ; in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God.’ Here, then, is a test by which we may all examine and prove our own selves. Is our Christianity outward, or inward ? in the flesh, or in the heart ? in the letter, or in the spirit ? and do we seek the praise of men, or the praise of God ? Some there are, who can answer these questions, with a good hope ; and, I trust, the number is increasing : persons, who, like Mary

have chosen the good part : and who prize, above all other things, the one thing needful. But, now, as formerly, among Christians, as among the Jews, an opposite something, is too frequently not only preferred, but laboured after ; and too many are still “ forsaking the fountain of living waters, and hewing them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.” Gross idolatry, it is true, is not our besetting sin. But there is an idolatry, more subtle, more insinuating, more closely interwoven with the fibres of the heart. That, in which any one seeks the rest and comfort of his soul, is, practically, his God. And, in this sense, this most just and awful sense, who can say, there are few idolaters among us ? Who is there, that seeks his happiness in God ? He who does not, does what the Jews did : he forsakes “ the fountain of living waters.” Who is there (a blessed few,—one here, and one there, excepted), who does not seek his happiness in some one or more worldly pursuit ? And what is this, but to “ hew out cisterns, broken cisterns ?” What is it, but to toil after a fictitious, unsatisfactory, fugitive good, while that river of God, which is full of water, flows by exhaustless but unheeded, though ready to communicate its happy streams, without money, and without price ?

But it is full time to sum up the amount of this inquiry. That alone, then, is genuine, that alone is valuable, that alone is worthy the pursuit of an immortal being, which will stand the test of our dying day. Let it, accordingly, be our effort, and our prayer, that we may so chuse our way of life now, as, at that day, we shall wish that we had chosen. We may, and, unless much holy vigilance and forecast be employed, too probably we shall, chuse wrong. And, for a time, perhaps for many years, we may be unconscious that we have wrongly chosen. Good health, good spirits, good fortune, and constitutional good humour, may keep away, for a long season, the period of reflection. But these are not permanent resources: "The evil days come, and the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." The question is, what shall we then think, of the objects that we have pursued, and the lives that we have led, and the hopes that we have indulged, and, I trust it may not be necessary to add,—the disappointment that has come upon us at the close. May God grant us grace to think now, determine now, act now, as we ought to think, to determine, and to act; and what pain, what sorrow, what despair, may we not escape, at that hour, when nothing human can avail us!

In one word, my brethren, it now remains, that you chuse your own portion : God, or the world ; the fountain of living waters, or the broken cisterns, which can hold no water. Were this life only in question, the advantage lies unspeakably with those, who forsake not the source of good. For what are the ordinary fruits of this desertion ? Ask those who are called men of the world, and, if they tell you the truth, they must tell you, that they are not happy. The heart feels it, and, too frequently, the looks proclaim it. And so it is, in all schemes and contrivances of mere worldly enjoyment, the gravest, no less than the most foolish. Indeed, it may be questioned, whether the gravity of this world, is not more intrinsically foolish than its gaiety. They who make it their first object, to strive for wealth, or fame, or power, and who do so with the amplest success, are far from finding rest unto their souls. This privilege is reserved, for the meek and lowly of heart ; while eager competitions, bitter heart-burnings, distracting anxieties, and killing disappointments, are, most commonly, the portion of ambitious, worldly adventurers. Nor are the votaries of pleasure, in any degree, more successful. He that had more experience than most men, of their false delights, has left it on

revel, that "even in laughter the heart is sad, and the end of that mirth is heaviness." The voluptuous gaiety, is but the vain attempt of those who have no resources within, to escape from the burthen of themselves. For the time, they may partially succeed; but what is their state of feeling in the morning? The words of the prophet may be very justly borrowed to describe it: it is "as a dream of a night vision; as when a thirsty man dreameth, and behold, he drinketh; but he awaketh, and behold, he is faint: his soul is empty, and his soul hath appetite." In this present life, then, the advantage lies not with those who cling to the world, and forsake their God. But who, at this side of the grave, can tell, how vast will be the difference in the life to come? On such a subject, and in such a place, I am altogether indisposed to indulge in the rashness of conjecture. But the word of revealed truth settles the matter with sufficient clearness, to decide the choice of any rational being. In the invisible world (it is our Lord himself who so instructs us,) in the invisible world, between the righteous and the sinner there is a great gulf fixed. On the one side, we hear the hewer of broken cisterns exclaiming, "Send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue, for I am

tormented in this flame." On the other side, we see Abraham placed at the celestial banquet, and Lazarus in his bosom. Then cometh the end: and the King is seated upon the throne of his glory; and these are the words which the King speaketh, unto them on his right hand: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the world."—"And they shall be before the throne of God, and shall serve Him day and night in his temple, and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat; but the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters."

DISCOURSE XIV.*

SAINT JOHN v. 39.

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES. OR: YE SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES.

THE ambiguity of the Greek original of these words is well known : and, in this place, and on this occasion, an inquiry into their proper meaning may be no unsuitable exercise. Nor am I altogether without hope, that this inquiry may be interesting in the progress ; and, in the sequel, may afford us profitable matter of reflection.

You are aware that the words, *ερευνάτε τὰς γραφὰς* may be understood imperatively, or indicatively ; as an injunction, or an assertion ; Search the Scriptures, or Ye search the Scriptures. Our venerable translators have given

* Act Sermon ; preached in the Chapel of Trinity College, Dublin, before the University, for the degree of B.D. 1821.

the preference to the former rendering. And, writing when they wrote, their preference was quite natural. The Fathers and early ecclesiastical writers, had, almost unanimously explained the passage, not as an assertion, but as a command; the only known exceptions being Nonnus, the Greek Paraphrast, and Cyril of Alexandria, who both flourished in the fifth century. The commentators of the middle ages, in this, as in most other particulars, were exact copyists of the Fathers who went before them. And, on the revival of letters, and Reformation of the Church, the great body of interpreters, both Lutheran and Reformed, understood our Lord, as, in these expressions, authoritatively enjoining the study of the Scriptures.

The lapse of two centuries, however, has afforded room for a re-judgment of the question. And a more extended, and at the same time, a more minute examination of the context, has decided the most, and the best, of modern critics and expositors, to understand the passage indicatively; and to explain it, as the significant assertion of an undisputed fact.

In venturing to coincide with this rendering and explanation, I am far from intending disrespect to the writings of the Fathers. For the most part, they were men of great ability.

And, after a manly institution in the porch of human literature, they fixed their permanent abode in the temple of the Scriptures. "Their delight was in the law of the Lord: and in his law did they meditate day and night." And the result is manifest, in their labours. They mastered the meaning, while they imbibed the spirit, of both Testaments. They defined the boundaries, while they defended both the out-works and the citadel, of the Christian faith. Triumphant in controversy, they were unrivalled in exhortation: for every good purpose, whether of defence or attack, whether of reproof, advice, or consolation, the words of truth stood ready at their call; and perhaps it might be scarcely an exaggeration to say, that, if all existing copies of the Scripture were destroyed, the Sacred Volume could be restored from the writings of the Fathers. But their fertility in popular instruction, and their familiarity with the words of Scripture, were by no means favourable to exactness of interpretation. In all the weightier matters of religion, indeed, in all express statements of the catholic truths of Christianity, they carefully respected the analogy of faith: but, in lesser points, and where the Christian verity was secure, they did not scruple to apply those passages, with which their memory was richly

stored, in a manner not strictly accordant with the principles of a sounder criticism. Their use, and their abuse, of allegorical interpretation, are too notorious to be dwelt upon : and, indeed, it is more within my present limits to observe, that, in the ardour of practical exhortation, they were apt to urge upon their hearers detached portions of Holy Writ, without cautiously adverting to the bearings of the context ; a practice which had a considerable, though, to themselves, probably, an imperceptible influence, on their more continued, and more elaborate commentaries. The present text may furnish an example. If taken imperatively, it would supply a pithy and forcible topic of popular address : if taken indicatively, its independent force, its hortatory strength, was gone ; and, however unquestionable its value and importance were, in union with its proper context, it could no more be urged as an awakening call ; it could no more be sounded in the ears of every Christian congregation, as the voice and the command of Christ himself. Here, then, the judgment had, by no means, an open field ; the ground was pre-occupied, by a moral inclination, the more strong, because, in all likelihood, wholly unsuspected, to determine on one side, and without any close scrutiny, the meaning of these ambiguous words. How the

Fathers determined, we already know; and why they so determined, we have, perhaps, offered no improbable conjecture.

Again: when the great religious movement of the sixteenth century brought the Scriptures into light; when, instead of being smothered, they were searched, and when, by numerous and faithful versions, the people were re-instated in that sacred birthright, of which they had been so long, and so shamefully defrauded, it cannot be denied, that controversy sometimes took the lead of impartial exposition. The new division of the Bible into verses, while it facilitated reference, became a hindrance to the course of just interpretation. The flow of many an important argument was broken and interrupted, while favourite texts, like insulated rocks, were continually seen to raise their heads above the stream. The maxim, that a good textuary is a good theologian, universally prevailed; and, by each contending party, short sentences of Scripture were fluently and plausibly alleged, while the context was too commonly disregarded, and parallel places were scarcely, if at all, examined and compared. And here, again, the words of our text may be adduced as an example. That dark tyrannical decree, which wrested the Scriptures from the hands of the laity, was justly

reprobated by the first Reformers. Their zeal naturally broke forth in argument: and an argumentative spirit is not commonly disposed, nor, if it were disposed, has it frequently sufficient leisure, to adjust the balance of conflicting evidence. "Search the Scriptures," appeared, with much probability, to stand on the face of the Greek Testament: with equal probability it was thought to stand on the face of the Latin Vulgate; for there, as in the Greek, the words are of uncertain import. In a season of calm reflection, further inquiry might have seemed expedient; but was it to be looked for, during the fervour of an agonistic conflict? It does not appear, that such inquiry was instituted; nor, under the existing circumstances, can the omission be just matter either of surprise or censure. "Search the Scriptures," accordingly, became a religious watchword; and the interpretation which threatened to deprive the controversialist of this advantage, was, of course, regarded with a jealous eye. But a season of reflection soon arrived. It was seen, that zealous Roman Catholics, interpreted the phrase as an injunction; it was seen, that equally zealous Protestants, viewed it as a simple affirmation. Good sense indicated, that the question was critical, not controversial; and the result has been, that,

from an early period of the last century, the best expositors of the Lutheran, the Reformed, and the Anglican Churches, are agreed in opinion, that the general tenor of our Lord's expostulation, the special bearing of the immediate context, and the known rules of justly-ordered composition, oblige us to understand, and interpret, the disputed words, indicatively,—“Ye search the Scriptures.”

But it is proper, that we should examine, for ourselves, the grounds and reasons of the question.

And, in the first place, let us briefly review the arguments which have been urged in support of the imperative rendering, “Search the Scriptures.”

It has been said, that, in the indicative mood, whenever the second person plural of the present tense begins a sentence, unpreceded by a pronoun, or by some particle, that sentence must be understood interrogatively: and that, if, as in the present case, a question be not intended, the verb must then be read imperatively. An argument, which, if borne out by facts would place the matter beyond dispute. But learned commentators have produced abundant examples, which contradict this ill-advised grammatical canon; nor will it, probably, again be

alleged by any writer of respectable attainments.

It has been said, that, in a passage of Scripture, wherever the sense is doubtful, and dependent on the meaning affixed to some particular word, that meaning ought to be preferred, which best agrees with the analogy of faith, and which most conduces to edification. And, on the strength of this rule, it has been argued, that, in the passage now under consideration, the word *σπουδαί* should be taken imperatively. But, in this case, the analogy of faith is wholly unconcerned; for either interpretation is accordant with that analogy. Nor is it a tenable position, nor, if tenable, would it be a safe one, that, in such doubtful cases, the interpreter is, in the first instance, to consult his reader's edification. For the adoption of a rule so indefinite and flexible, would subject the Divine Word to the irregularities of human fancy: each interpreter being at liberty to contend, that his mode of understanding each disputed text, is the most conducive to edification. The rule must, therefore, be corrected: it must be understood that the whole circumstances of the context shall be first attentively examined; and, after such examination, I think it will invariably be found, that the truest edification is derivable from that

sense, which best accords, not with some imaginary standard in the commentator's mind, but with the general scope and design of the sacred writer. While, therefore, I must, on principle, dissent from the proposed interpretative canon, I am under no apprehension, that the meaning, which, in this particular instance, I hope to establish by a more legitimate procedure, will be found deficient in practical results of the most important, and most edifying character.

It has been said, that the word *επευκτε* is peculiarly emphatic; that it denotes a careful, diligent, and scrutinizing investigation; and that such investigation of the Scriptures could hardly have been ascribed by our Lord to the Jewish people of his day. In reply, it might be urged, that several of the most acute and learned critics and lexicographers of modern times deny the reality of this emphasis, and bring no contemptible arguments in support of their denial. But, after much consideration, I am obliged to think that the word *is* emphatical: and, even so, I am not afraid to meet the opponents on their own ground: and to contend, that our Lord might have attributed, and actually did attribute, to those whom he was addressing, no common diligence and perseverance in the study of the sacred Scriptures. This, however, will be suf-

ficiently apparent, in the sequel of the present discourse. Meantime, let the objection just stated, be attentively kept in mind, and, I trust, my hearers will soon find it, not merely obviated, but overthrown.

These are the only arguments which I have been able to discover, in support of the imperative rendering. "Search the Scriptures." I have tried to state them honestly, in their full force; and I cannot account them of sufficient weight, any longer to detain me from the production of reasons for the indicative rendering, "Ye search the Scriptures."

My first reason shall be drawn from a consideration of the auditory to whom our Lord addressed the disputed words. We learn from Saint John, that *that* auditory consisted of the Jews; a designation used throughout the New Testament with much latitude, and variety; sometimes, applied to the whole body of the people; and sometimes, to a particular class or division of that body. But, in the present case, it is evident from the context, that a very select and distinguished class of the Jews is intended; no mixed and tumultuous assemblage, but some regularly constituted tribunal, which was making authoritative inquiry into specific charges brought against our Lord; a tribunal, as it

appears from our Lord's majestic defence, which had before deputed a commission of Priests and Levites, to ascertain the character and office of John the Baptist; a tribunal, in a word, according to those best skilled in Jewish antiquities, none other than the great Sanhedrim, the supreme court both of civil and religious judicature. Now, to enjoin it on the doctors of the great Sanhedrim to search the Scriptures, would have been at once needless, and offensive; needless, because they were, at all times, most diligent explorers of the Sacred Volume; and because, in our Lord's time especially, they were most copious, and most accurate, in the investigation of those prophecies in particular, which respected the Messiah: and offensive, because they made such investigation not only their employment, but their glory; and felt no small complacency, in being hailed by popular acclamation, as 'the foundations of the law, and the pillars of instruction.' By such an auditory, "Search the Scriptures," would have been deemed a ridiculous, and insulting precept; and indeed it would have ill accorded with the consummate prudence and delicacy which characterize all the discourses of our Lord. But take it as an assertion, and, while it strictly agrees with the reality of things, it has all the force of

dignified expostulation, and admirably prepares the way, as we shall presently discover, for the remainder of our Lord's defence; a defence, which was at the moment, and which still continues to be, the severest, and the most unanswerable crimination, of those who sat in judgment on his works and words.

Thus far, our attention has been directed exclusively to the words of the text. But if we examine these words as united with their context, the argument will gain much additional force. Let us, then, proceed gradually with this examination. The next words are, "For in them ye think ye have eternal life." Now, if the text be understood as an injunction, I do not see how the passage can be cleared from the charges of incoherence, and inconsequence. "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life." The latter clause of this sentence must be taken as an argument to enforce the former. But, how strange an argument! "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life:" surely, their so thinking, afforded a sufficient pledge that they would not neglect the study of the Scriptures; and can we suppose our Lord so weak a reasoner, as to support his injunction by a motive, which, on the very face of it, must have superseded all injunction? If

indeed, He had said, 'Search the Scriptures, for in them ye may find eternal life,' the argument would, so far as these two clauses are concerned, and no further, have been clear, consecutive, and forcible. But our Lord did *not* employ these words. And my full conviction, that He never, for a moment, lost sight of the closest order and coherence, obliges me to examine, whether the words which He *did* employ, do not, in another way, afford an unexceptionable meaning. Let us then take the passage indicatively. "Ye search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life." This is obvious, natural, and conclusive. First, our Lord asserts that the Jewish doctors were diligent explorers of the Sacred Volume; then, He assigns the reason of their diligence. 'You are accurate students of the Scripture: and why? — because you think, that, in the Scripture you possess eternal life; because you are persuaded, that the bare study of the law, will, *ex opere operato*, secure, beyond all doubt, your everlasting salvation.' Such was the assertion of our blessed Lord; and observe, how it is borne out by the known, and recorded tenets of the Jewish teachers. 'Whosoever,' say they, 'is abundant in the study of the law, he multiplieth unto himself eternal life.'—'Whosoever acquireth to himself the words of the law, he

acquireth to himself eternal life.'—'Whosoever giveth his labour to the law in this world, he is worthy to receive an inheritance in the world to come.' So far, then, is our Lord from enjoining on the Jewish doctors the study of holy Scripture, that He pointedly upbraids them, with pursuing that study, from mercenary calculation; with resting on the mere letter of Scripture, as their passport to a happy futurity; with making, as it were, a traffic and a barter, of so much mental labour, for so much heavenly enjoyment. "Ye search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life."

And thus, our way is cleared for a further elucidation of the context: "Ye search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they, which testify of me; and ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." After what has been said, the connection of this passage is abundantly obvious. It is a grave, yet animated expostulation, distributed into four clauses, alternately opposed, the first clause to the third, and the second to the fourth: "Ye search the Scriptures; and they are they, which testify of me: for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." As though our Lord had said;—'You are indefatigable scrutinizers of

the sacred writings, and yet fail to observe, that those writings are, eminently, and emphatically, the witnesses of my divine mission: you expect, in virtue of this laborious scrutiny, to obtain eternal life; and yet, you will not come for its attainment, to me, the ready, unbought, and overflowing fountain of eternal life.' Such is the clear meaning of the passage; and it is in full accordance with the historical truth of things. For, the more learned Jews, made it their chosen occupation to investigate the Scriptures: they did so, in our Lord's time, with avowed anxiety to discover the signs and character of their expected Messiah: but they read with a veil upon their hearts and minds; and were, therefore, both unable, and unwilling, to discover in the blessed Jesus, that Messiah, to whom all the law and the prophets did bear witness. In like manner, they were anxious to attain a state of future blessedness: but they sought to attain it, by their own proudly independent efforts: and therefore they scorned to receive it as a gift, and especially as a gift from Him, who "was despised and rejected of men." And thus it is, that the incontrovertible dispositions and procedure of the Jews, conspire with the finished and methodical distribution of this context, to establish the indicative rendering of the disputed words. Understand them as

an injunction, and this beautiful order is destroyed; and so destroyed, as, at the same time, to weaken, if not to overthrow, an otherwise unassailable agreement with historic truth. But understand them as an assertion, and all is obviously consistent. The character of the Jews stands forth in its true light, as unprofitable searchers of the sacred records. And the masterly composition is felt to be worthy of Him, who "spake as never man spake."

But it still remains to be examined, how far the present interpretation of four connected clauses, agrees with the general scope and tenor of our Lord's argument. Let us, then, briefly advert to the scheme of his entire discourse. He had been brought before the Sanhedrim, to answer for the crime of healing a sick man on the Sabbath-day. The first words that He uttered, subjected Him to the still weightier charge, of blasphemy, of making Himself equal with God. And how does He meet this charge? In the first place, and with incomparable dignity, by an assertion of his character and office, as the Son of God, and as the Son of Man. And then, turning on his accusers, He convicts them, by the most powerful reasoning, and in a strain of calm, and yet indignant expostulation, of incredulity the most inveterate, and the least excusable. He

recites, and graphically describes, the various kinds and degrees of evidence for his Divine mission, which the Jewish doctors had examined and rejected. The testimony of John, the testimony of miraculous works, the testimony of the Father, the testimony of Moses, in whom they placed their special trust. 'Ye sent unto John; and did not believe his testimony: ye have witnessed my miracles; and do not confess my power: ye have known the testimony of my Father, even a voice from heaven; and that testimony you will not receive: ye profess to trust in Moses, yet he wrote of me; and his writings you will not believe.' Such is the scope of our Lord's argument; one only branch of it, I have purposely omitted in this brief review. "Ye search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they, which testify of me; and ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." Who does not perceive, that this paragraph is cast in the same mould with all the preceding? Who does not feel, that the symmetry of the whole composition would be disfigured, and, what is of more consequence, the chain of a most linked and concatenated argument broken, by converting this indignant expostulation, into a fragment of hortatory address? The case, in my judgment, is too plainly made

out, to admit of any further discussion. And I trust, no one of my hearers entertains a doubt, that our Lord meant, not to enjoin upon his Jewish auditory the study of the Scriptures, but to upbraid them with having pursued that study, from mercenary motives, in a disbelieving spirit, and without any view to the true spiritual welfare of their souls.

The meaning thus established, will, I hope, not be found deficient in practical results of the most important and most edifying character. From the case of the Jews, we may learn, how possible it is, not only to read the Scriptures, but to read them with attention, with diligence, and even with some degree of lively interest, and, at the same time, to reap no other fruit from this study, than heightened responsibility and aggravated condemnation. And, at the present day, this lesson would seem to be particularly seasonable. For, on the one hand, from a zeal very sincere, but not very considerate, the Scriptures are circulated in such a manner, as, unintentionally, I am sure, but still effectually, to countenance the notion, that the mere perusal, I had almost said the bare possession, of the Sacred Volume, may be available for the attainment of eternal life ; whilst, on the other hand, we find melancholy proof, that

the Bibles indiscriminately scattered through the land, may be rendered instrumental to the most wicked and infernal purposes. The volume of Scripture is now in every hand. And men, without faith, without hope, without charity, without God in the world, are labouring to convert that volume, into the text-book of anarchy and atheism. The book, the chapter, and the verse, are unblushingly referred to, whence a disastrous and diabolical chymistry extracts the 'poison of blasphemy and unbelief. The shops, the markets, the stalls, the very courts of justice, are saturated with those materials of destruction temporal and eternal. And, at such a time, and amidst such a deluge of unnatural impiety, the people ought to be set upon their guard. They ought to be instructed, how possible it is to read the Scriptures, not only without edification, but with moral and spiritual detriment. They ought to be made sensible, that the word of God, if it prove not a savour of life unto life, may become a savour of death unto death. They ought to be warned, in the same spirit, and almost in the same words, with which our blessed Saviour warned the Jews of old: "Take heed how ye hear," was his solemn admonition; and, from every pulpit in this nation, and by every minister of God's holy word, I could wish to hear pro-

nounced the seasonable, salutary warning, —
Beware how ye read!

But it is not merely by the illiterate vulgar, that the Scriptures may be unprofitably and dangerously read. In the last age, those infidels, who called themselves philosophical, were notoriously, and avowedly, unversed in the pages of inspiration. But, in the present day, it often happens, that philosophical infidels, are also philological divines. Men, daily and elaborately conversant with the sacred text, aware of its difficulties, not altogether insensible to its beauties, and prepared, with some skill, and much pretension, to assail Scripture from Scripture, truth from truth, revelation from revelation. The unbelievers of the last age, were content to borrow the materials of their baseless system, from the schools of Democritus and Pyrrho; but those materials have been exhausted, and that system found untenable. Their successors, accordingly, with more effrontery, and, in one division of Europe, with greater success, have betaken themselves, at once to the study, and perversion of the Scriptures. And, though this be an unconscious tribute to the supremacy of that volume, which cannot be assailed from without itself, it is still a melancholy spectacle, to see the chairs of foreign universities filled with professors, who,

by every art of shallow, but imposing, attempt to undermine that faith, which the Pope solemnly promised to maintain and defend. From such deadly apostacy, notwithstanding the intrusion from abroad of much profane theology, we, of this favoured and happy empire are yet happily preserved. Our priests still keep knowledge, and still proclaim the words of unsophisticated piety; our universities still train up the youth of our countries, in the faith of their fathers; and send forth a clergy, learned in the scriptures, and conscientiously attached to the doctrine of our Catholic and Apostolic Church. If we may enjoy these blessings, we need not scrutable Wisdom to determine, whether we may remain assured, that such a state of things is individually enjoyed, so far as the people are individually prepared for their improvement in the cultivation of piety in our hearts, moderation in our minds, moderation in our passions, and ableness in all our intellectual faculties.

One word of practical advice. The text of this discourse does not, directly enjoin on us the study of the scriptures. But reason, revelation, and the example of the saints may, and must abundantly supply the place of the neglected study of the

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of this narrative, in the
 Acts, may be compressed
 s instructive matter might
 ny volumes.

been intrusted, by his Divine
 keys of the kingdom of hea-
 the office and privilege of
 to Jews, and Gentiles, the
 Christian Church. The former
 mission, he had fulfilled, on the
 of Pentecost ; when, through
 there were added to the Church
 thousand souls. For the perform-
 matter part, he was not yet suitably
 Jewish prejudices still clung to his
 part ; he still accounted the Gentiles
 of unclean ; he still esteemed them
 admission, into the ordinary society

DISCOURSE XV.

ACTS x. 1.

THERE WAS A CERTAIN MAN IN CÆSAREA, CALLED CORNELIUS;
A CENTURION OF THE BAND, CALLED THE ITALIAN BAND.

THIS is the plain and simple opening, of a plain and simple narrative; but the subject-matter of that narrative is peculiarly important: no less, than the first admission of the Gentiles into the Church of Christ: an event, pre-ordained from the foundation of the world; foretold by a succession of prophets, from the dying benediction of Noah, to the dying song of Symeon; pre-figured by types and parables, in the Old Testament, and in the New; matured by a long, but indispensable preparation of circumstances, in the Jewish and the Gentile world; announced by our blessed Lord, as a leading object of his care on earth; ushered in, by the ministration of angels, and by the voice of God, from hea-

ven ; sealed by a miraculous effusion of the Holy Spirit ; involving consequences of the utmost range, and magnitude,—at this moment in operation, and to continue in progressive operation, till that glorious period, when, the fulness of the Gentiles being come in, blindness shall be removed from Israel ; and all Israel shall be saved ; and all the ends of the world shall turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Him.

The leading object of this narrative, in the tenth chapter of the Acts, may be compressed into a few words ; its instructive matter might be expanded into many volumes.

Saint Peter had been intrusted, by his Divine Master, with the keys of the kingdom of heaven ; that is, with the office and privilege of first opening, both to Jews, and Gentiles, the gates of the Christian Church. The former part of this commission, he had fulfilled, on the memorable day of Pentecost ; when, through his ministry, there were added to the Church about three thousand souls. For the performance of the latter part, he was not yet suitably prepared. Jewish prejudices still clung to his mind and heart ; he still accounted the Gentiles common and unclean ; he still esteemed them unworthy of admission, into the ordinary society

of his countrymen, much less, of reception into the solemn assembly of the Church of God.

But a second Pentecost was near at hand. To correct the Apostle's narrow, and erroneous views, a trance came upon him; a mysterious, but, significant vision appeared; and the Divine voice instructed him, that, what God had cleansed, whether it were thing or person, he was neither to call, nor to consider, common, or unclean. No sooner had the vision closed, than, by God's special appointment, three messengers stood before the gate, from Cæsarea, from Cornelius, a Roman centurion, and a Gentile, who had been visited by an angel, and divinely warned to send for Peter.

Instructed by the Holy Spirit, the Apostle obeyed the heavenly call; and hospitably received¹ those Gentile messengers, with whom, but an hour before, he would have accounted it a profanation to associate. The next day, accompanied by six members of the Church in Joppa, wisely retained, as witnesses of what might happen, he proceeded to Cæsarea. (1) There, he found Cornelius, his family, and near friends, in a state of earnest expectation; to whom he succinctly, but impressively, stated the first principles of the doctrine of Christ. And, while he yet spake, the Holy Ghost fell on all them that

¹ ἐξενίστε.

heard the word ; the same miraculous gifts were poured forth, as on the day of Pentecost ; these favoured Gentiles spake with tongues, and magnified God ; and Peter commanded them to be baptized, in the name of the Lord.

In this remarkable transaction, there is much that demands, and will repay, our particular attention : it is, accordingly, my purpose to examine the circumstances of it, in the following discourse, confining myself to three important features in the history, the *time*, the *place*, and *the character of Cornelius* ; and concluding, with a brief statement of the practical result.

First, then, let us consider the *time*, providentially selected, for this great event.

Immediately before his ascension, our Saviour's parting words conveyed to his apostles a two-fold prediction : " Ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria ; and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." The former branch of this prophecy, had, before the calling of Cornelius, been effectually fulfilled. In Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, during the space of eight years, the Gospel had been preached, to those of the circumcision only. And to the circumcision it was thus exclusively confined, through the national prejudices of the Apostles themselves.

But, at some period, those prejudices were to be dissolved; at some period, the latter division of our Lord's prophecy was to be accomplished; at some period, the apostolic testimony was to be extended to the uttermost part of the earth: "Other sheep I have," said the good Shepherd, "which are not of this fold; them also must I bring; and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd."

Now, for the commencement of this enlarged economy, what period was the most favourable? A rational conviction of God's providential wisdom, would pre-dispose us to reply, the very period that was chosen. And this we hope to prove, by satisfactory evidence.

Had the Gentiles, from the first, been admitted into the Christian Church, their admission must have inevitably impeded the conversion of the Jews, tenacious of privileges hitherto exclusively their own, and abhorrent even from all civil communion, with the heathen world. But, making the extreme supposition, that the Jews might have, at once, consented to a religious union, the Church could not, under such circumstances, have assumed its proper shape and colour. From prophecy, from the apostolic writings, and from the most obvious fitness, it is unquestionable, that in government,

discipline, and worship, the Christian Church was to be a liberalized modification of the Jewish. But, for the voluntary adoption of such a system, when the formation of a new system might have appeared fair matter of choice, the Gentiles were, in habit, and in feeling, alike indisposed and unprepared. Collision and controversy would have prematurely afflicted the infant society; and the first believers would have little merited that honourable distinction, and, what is of more consequence, that recommendation to a good degree of popular favour,—that they were “of one heart and of one soul.” Before the Gentiles, therefore, could safely be admitted, some considerable space of time was needful, towards the firm establishment of a system at unity with itself; a system, which should be a continuation, rather, of God’s ancient Church, than the substitution of a new one. The tree which the Almighty had planted, and watered, and enclosed for himself, was not to be cut down, but re-invigorated; and, in order to this re-invigoration, it was not till after a due preparation of the parent-stock, that the branches of a wild olive-tree were to be engrafted: that is, in other words, when Judaism was fully modified into Christianity, and not sooner, the Gentiles were to be adopted, as members of the Church.

But, as it would have been dangerous to precipitate the measure, so, on the other hand, to protract it might have been fatal. Gross Judaism but too early became the epidemic of the Christian community; to counteract this growing disease, a foreign infusion was essential; and, even with this aid, it is clear, both from the history of Saint Luke, and from the letters of Saint Paul, how difficult it was, to preserve a just temperament, equally remote from all extremes. Thus, by the very exigencies of the case, a middle term seems to have been fixed, between the immediate admission, and the long-continued exclusion, of the Gentile world.

Again: before the Gentiles could, with full advantage, be admitted, it was expedient, if not indispensable, that the moral efficacy of Christianity should be established by moral evidence. The wiser heathen had long been, ardently, but unsuccessfully, in search of a medicine for the soul; and it was not till after the Gospel, had, in numberless instances, displayed its healing power, that its preachers could fairly, or prudently, say to the disappointed moralist, — ‘What you seek is here.’ For this purpose, also, time was needful: Christianity could not put forth her full strength, till the most trying emergencies arose; and it was not immediately,

that the early converts experienced, in all their rigour, all the vicissitudes, of tribulation, and distress, and persecution, and famine, and nakedness, and peril, and sword. But here, too, the Church could not long dispense with the assistance of the Gentiles. Jewish persecution gradually assumed a form, which menaced the extinction, at once of the Gospel and its teachers. A new accession of strength was, therefore, most desirable ; and it is evident from the apostolic history, that, in many instances, Gentile influence was a safeguard against the fury of Jewish intolerance. Thus, again, some middle term, between immediate admission, and protracted exclusion, was best calculated to meet the exigencies of the case.

Let us, now, consider the actual point of time, which was providentially selected. When Saint Peter was divinely commissioned to receive Cornelius into the Church, Christianity had been preached to the Jews alone, for about eight years. A period, sufficient to establish a just system of government, discipline, and worship ; yet not so far protracted, as to perpetuate the errors of gross Judaism : a period, sufficient, to evince, by sufferings, and trials, the moral efficacy of the Christian faith ; but not so far protracted as to preclude the accession of new strength in the

day of extreme necessity : a period, in a word, coincident with that very middle term which, on so many accounts, we have seen, was most suitable for the safe and salutary admission of the Gentiles.

But further : the Churches of Palestine, at this juncture, enjoyed a short calm, after the first Jewish persecution ; and were thence enabled, with due caution and solemnity, to investigate the extraordinary occurrences, both at Joppa and at Cæsarea. The number of disciples already scattered, by that persecution, through the chief cities of the East, were so many ready instruments to promote the diffusion of the Gospel : and that number was soon to receive a considerable accession, from the second persecution, under Herod Agrippa. Nor, let it be omitted, that Saint Paul was now amply qualified for his peculiar ministry, as Apostle of the Gentiles, by an interval of six years from his conversion, chiefly spent in the solitude, and silence, of the Desert Arabia ; and in the unambitious retirement of his native city. All circumstances, therefore, now favourably conspired. The constitution and worship of the Church, were placed beyond risk of innovation : gross Judaism required, and received, a check and counterpoise : the Christian religion had experimentally evinced its moral

power : the impending virulence of Jewish persecution, called for an accession of strength to the weaker party : the short peace of the Church, silenced prejudice, by facilitating inquiry : the dispersion of many disciples, through the chief cities of the empire, favoured a rapid diffusion of the Gospel, through the known world : and the long preparation of Saint Paul, ensured the most well-directed energy in his approaching apostolic labours. May we not, therefore, safely assert, that, in the happiest selection of time, for commencing this extended economy, we have abundant evidence of God's providential wisdom ?

The *place*, is the next particular to be considered. Cæsarea was the first city of Palestine ; the seat of the Roman government ; inhabited principally by Gentiles ; situated on the shore of the Mediterranean. (2) Thus, on the one hand, every facility for investigation was afforded, to the mother-Church of Jerusalem, tenacious of her hitherto inviolable separation from the Gentile world ; and, on the other hand, means were provided, at once, for immediately forming a large body of Gentile converts, and for rapidly disseminating the faith, through other branches of the empire. Had the scene of this great event, been out of Palestine, misconception and misrepresentation, operating on the jealousy of

Jewish Christians, must have excited a deadly schism in the Church. Had any other city of Palestine been chosen, it could neither have afforded an adequate number of Gentile inhabitants, nor left room for presenting the truths of Christianity, to individuals of weight and influence among the Gentiles ; nor provided means, alike obvious and effectual, for announcing, from the seat of government, by various channels of intercourse, the glad tidings of salvation, to the uttermost parts of the earth. These things I have intimated briefly, instead of expanding them into a lengthened argument, not from any doubt, but from a strong conviction, of their great importance. Words would but detract from their intrinsic value ; they are proposed, that they may be examined ; and my persuasion is, that, the more attentively they are examined, the more satisfactorily it will appear, that no place in the whole world, could have been selected, so favourable for the first conversion of the Gentiles, as the city of Cæsarea.

It remains, that we advert, in a few words, to *the character of Cornelius*. His habits were those, rather of a devout Jew, than of a philosophic Gentile, much less of a military heathen. He feared God, he fasted, he prayed, he observed the Jewish hours of devotion, he gave much

alms to the Jewish people. Could any imaginable circumstances, short of actual conformity, have been better calculated to disarm the prejudices of a Jewish zealot. And they had disarmed them: for the sacred historian avouches, that Cornelius was "of good report among all the nation of the Jews." Among the Gentiles, his estimation could not have been inferior. Of their own stock, a Gentile of the Gentiles, he had attained an honourable rank in that profession, accounted the most honourable in itself, and a necessary passport to all higher distinctions in the Roman empire. Possessing considerable wealth, he had gained it worthily, for he was a just man; and he dispensed it generously, for his bounty was not only known among men, but approved unto God. His pure integrity, his rare humanity, his affectionate attachment to his kinsmen, and his friends, all evident from Saint Luke's narrative, all prove, that those who knew him, must have loved him; all point to the conclusion, that truth itself must have been strengthened by his adoption of it. His military station, too, gave him a commanding influence over many minds, which it appears he most beneficially exerted: while the moral efficacy of his good example may be inferred, from the promptitude with which numerous friends attended his call, to meet the

I am satisfied that I have succeeded in
showing that there will always be no living
and no feeling, and therefore distant times,
when the present will be a master
dominant in the great future. Because
I am satisfied you will agree with me that those
times, those years, and that character are of
great importance in the Christian dispensation.
The coincidence here exhibited, is a most re-
markable arrangement of providential wisdom.
The communication of Christianity, in this pre-
cise way, was an event above the reach of human
forethought; big with consequences far beyond
the range of human calculation. Salvific, and

effectually, to enlighten the Gentiles was the great object: and, if it were given as a problem, to discover the best means for its accomplishment, where is the human, where the angelic intelligence, that could presume to suggest better means than those actually pursued? In all appearance, no time in the Christian annals, was so favourable as that short rest of the Churches in Palestine; no place in the world, so well circumstanced as Cæsarea; no individual among the Gentiles, so well prepared and qualified, as Cornelius the Centurion. The possible contingencies which might have prevented this coincidence, and the actual combinations which were necessary to effect it, are so various, as not merely to preclude enumeration, but even to baffle our utmost powers of conception. Man could not have thus disposed and regulated events. It was the work of Him "who hath made of one blood, all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth; and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation."

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ance of its ruins. Not a single inhabitant remains. Its theatres, once resounding with the shouts of multitudes, echo no other sound than the nightly cry of animals roaring for their prey. Of its gorgeous palaces and temples, enriched with the choicest works of art, and decorated with the most precious marbles, scarcely a trace can be discerned. Within the space of ten years after laying the foundation, from an obscure fortress, it became the most celebrated and flourishing city of all Syria.' — Dr. Clarke's Travels, vol. iv. p. 446. 8vo.

It may be interesting, to contrast with this desolation, the original magnificence of Cæsarea. — See Joseph. Antiq. Jud. XV. ix. 6. p. 694. Huds. Ibid. XVI. v. 1. pp. 719, 720.

misery. It is more to approve what is right: but who does not feel, that the cold conviction of our judgment, can do little against the head-long propensities of inclination? It is more still, to have our affections engaged by the loveliness of virtue: but even here, inveterate habits, and sudden temptations, and counter-attractions, may keep us in a state of hopeless bondage, or, at best, of unsuccessful conflict. The truth is, and, with the whole scope of the apostle's argument in our view, and with the accumulated experience of ages before us, we may fearlessly assert it, that, not the most perfect rule of duty, not all the commandments of the Old Testament, not all the precepts of the New, not the sincerest wishes of our hearts, not the most strenuous exertions of our powers, are, in themselves, sufficient to give purity to the mind, and peace to the conscience. Some new, some inspiring, some victorious principle (1) must be established within us, before we can attain a state of freedom and of power. And this principle is to be derived only from the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, received, apprehended, and felt, not merely as a body of moral instruction, but as a system of spiritual influence. All this may here be safely asserted, inasmuch as precisely this, is the doctrine of our present text: for, "what

even by higher motives, than the dread of future punishment, and the hope of future reward; and yet, what is actually the moral and spiritual condition of this man? We learn it from his own lips: he complains, and bitterly complains, that he is "carnal," "sold under sin;" that "in his flesh, dwelleth no good thing;" that "the good which he would, he does not, but the evil which he would not, that he does;" that he "feels a law in his members, warring against the law of his mind, and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin;" and he concludes this melancholy exhibition of human inconsistency, with an exclamation of deep mental agony,—*"Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death!"*

This is the utmost which can be effected, independently of those higher influences, that imparted strength, that "law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus," which alone can make us free, from "the law of sin and death." (2) But, let it be carefully observed, that this state, low, imperfect, and unsatisfactory, as we must confess it to be, is far preferable to that frigid indifference, in which most men are content to live, respecting their spiritual state; respecting those tempers, habits, and tastes, which cannot be shaken off at the moment of death; which must

ding to them through all the changes of the
 present and vanishing world. The person here
 described by the apostle is at least thoroughly
 awake and earnest: he is serious, reflective,
 and anxious for improvement: he feels the
 weight and misery of his evil nature: it is
 distressing, it is humiliating. There is no wish to
 lower the standard of goodness: no reserve in
 favour of any cherished sin, no attempt to re-
 concile the hope of future happiness with the
 continuance of present evil. He, evidently,
 and earnestly, longs after immediate, universal,
 and complete deliverance from his wrong pro-
 pensities. He speaks the words of deep inward
 feeling: a language, which hypocrisy could
 not counterfeit, and which insensibility could
 not invent: - "Wretched man that I am, who
 shall deliver me from the body of this death?"
 If human language ever was the index of human
 feeling, we may here discern that repentance,
 which is the forerunner of true faith: that
 poverty of spirit, which leadeth to the kingdom
 of Heaven: that sighing of a contrite heart,
 which God doth not despise.

God doth not despise it, my brethren: and
 observe, in the present instance, how immediately,
 I had almost said how instantaneously, this
 fervent aspiration is followed by a sense of des-

liverance and safety,—“I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord!” The transition is rapid, vehement, unstudied: it is the quick return of gratitude, for unexpected mercy; it is the sudden emotion of a heart, rejoicing in the change, from death to life, from wretchedness to peace, from fruitless conflict, to victorious freedom. He who, till this moment, had been a culprit self-accused and self-condemned, a captive to the law of sin and death, now feels himself restored to the calm approval of his own conscience, to the influences of Divine grace, to the employment of all his powers in the love and service of his Maker. (3) In the full consciousness of this happy transformation, he briefly sums up his past wretchedness, in a few significant words, as if to dismiss it for ever ¹, and then triumphantly exclaims, “There is, therefore, now no condemnation, to them, which are in Christ Jesus; who walk, not after the flesh, but after the spirit; for the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, has made me free from the law of sin and death.” And, in the words of our text, he gratefully recognizes the influential agency, by which this happy change was accomplished: for, “What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son, in the like-

¹ Rom. vii. 25.

ness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk, not after the flesh, but after the spirit."

And here, it may be useful to consider the general character of the Apostle's language, throughout this whole chapter. It is, certainly, no slight, superficial, merely outward change, that he describes. The whole man is renewed, in body, soul, and spirit. A principle, unknown, or at least unfelt before, is now become the ruling principle of heart and life. And the subjects of this principle, are designated, by marks too distinct and definite, to leave any doubt respecting the reality of the change within them:—they "mind," they relish, they think upon "the things of the Spirit;" they are "spiritually minded, which is life and peace." The Spirit dwelleth in them: the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of Him who raised up Christ from the dead, the Spirit by which they are led, after which they walk, and through which they mortify the deeds of the body. They are become the sons of God; they have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby they cry Abba, Father! They know and feel, that they are the children of God; and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.

"They are raised above the fear of tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword; in all these things being more than conquerors, through Him that loved them." And finally, they are persuaded, on the surest grounds, that "neither life, nor death, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate them from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

This is "what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh:" thus it is, that "the righteousness of the law is fulfilled, in those who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." The change, here described, is deep, inward, universal; the very sources of thought and action are purified, by that blessed Spirit, which inspires every holy desire, every pious disposition, every humane and charitable temper. Goodness has now become the natural, unforced movement, of the mind and heart; peace with God, and peace with man, are the blessed consequences; servile fear is fled; filial confidence supplies its place; an unpresumptuous confidence, which rests, not on the efficacy of human exertions, but on the omnipotence of Divine grace. (4) For, be it observed, throughout the

whole of this instructive chapter, every thing good, and estimable, is clearly referred to the operation of God's Holy Spirit. From this Spirit, we are here taught and encouraged to seek all comfort for the present, all hope for the future, all strength in the hour of temptation, all fortitude amidst the changes and chances of this mortal life, all quiet and assurance, in that trying hour, when we must exchange time for eternity. It is, in truth, the essence at once of Christian humility, and Christian strength, to know and feel, not as a theory contained in books, but as a truth experimented in real life, that, in ourselves, we are poor, weak, helpless beings, and that our sufficiency is entirely of God. And this lesson is, perhaps, not more forcibly inculcated in any part of Scripture, than in those very chapters of Saint Paul's Epistle to the Romans, which have been the object of our present consideration.

In the seventh chapter, we have a picture of human infirmity, which the hand of a master only could have drawn. A truly conscientious man, with a moral mind, and a keen perception of right and wrong; not only sincere, but ardent, in his wish to be outwardly and inwardly conformed to the law of God; engaged in a long, a strenuous, a persevering struggle, with the

wrong propensities of his' nature. And what is the result? Nothing but shame and disappointment. His conduct directly at variance with his principles and feelings; the higher powers of his mind enslaved by his animal instincts; a melancholy succession of resolutions and relapses, without advance, or progress, or a gleam of comfort. He deplores his weakness; he confesses his depravity; he can utter only the language of humiliation and sorrow.

And such must ever be the result of merely human efforts. Nay, the more earnest, and anxious, such efforts are, the more entirely will their insufficiency be felt. For that conscientiousness, which must be at the bottom of all such efforts, greatly enlarges spiritual perception, and deepens spiritual feeling. It makes men sensible of errors and omissions, which, in a less advanced state, would pass unheeded; it teaches them, that God's commandments are exceeding broad; it shows the vast disproportion, between what we wish, and what we can accomplish; in a word, wherever conscience is thoroughly awake, arguments will be needless, to convince us, that, without the special influence of God's Holy Spirit, we can neither think, nor do, any thing that is rightful.

Thus much for the moral painting of the

seventh chapter to the Romans: in the eighth chapter, we are introduced to a more cheerful prospect. We there behold the same person, who had so long, and so painfully, toiled through a course of fruitless efforts, and disappointed hopes, at once informed and actuated by a principle of life, and strength, and power. We see him peaceful, happy, and serene; freed from every distracting inquietude about the present, from all tormenting care about the future: devoted to the love and service of that God, who saved him from the bitterness of sin and death; quietly receiving, and prepared henceforward to receive, all events, as from his heavenly Father's hand, in full assurance that they are ordained, or permitted, no less by infinite goodness, than by Almighty power. He loves God, and he therefore knows, that all things will, sooner or later, "work together for his good;" he trusts in God, and is therefore ready to go, at his summons, from the world that is seen, to the world that is unseen, —being persuaded that "neither life, nor death, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate him from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

This, my brethren, is no picture of the imagination; no antiquated ceremonial controversy;

no obsolete question, about the lighter matters of the law. It is a picture of the human heart; a controversy between the powers of light and darkness; a question, that involves our everlasting interests. It calls us to considerations, which, in the sight of accountable beings, possibly on the verge of eternity, certainly at no great distance from it, should outweigh all earthly things. It calls us, to examine with all diligent seriousness, whether we are in captivity to the law of sin and death, or enfranchised by the law of the Spirit of life; whether we are carnally minded, which is death, or spiritually minded, which is life and peace; whether we lie sunk in the bondage of corruption, or move in the light of heaven, with the glorious liberty of the children of God. The importance of these questions, can be adequately known only in the future world, for there alone will be fully disclosed, the intrinsic nature of sin and holiness, with the whole train of their never-ending consequences. But even now, let us put these questions to our own souls: what are we? what is our course of life? to what purpose are we living? to what place are we going? to heaven or to hell? These are questions, which it behoves every one of us, in the secret chambers, each of our individual conscience, to ask and to answer. And if these

be supposed, that we are to be indolent and inactive, under the pretext of waiting for an influx of irresistible grace. True Christianity is rational and sober. It disclaims enthusiasm on the one hand, as decidedly, as it rejects pharisaical coldness on the other. It employs all the powers and faculties of man, upon their best and noblest objects. It is throughout, and from the commencement, a system of well-regulated activity ; in which, while God is the supreme director, man has also his part and place assigned. So indispensable, indeed, is exertion on our part, that, without human co-operation, Divine grace itself would cease to be efficacious. (5) We are called, therefore, to alertness and alacrity. Throughout the whole process, we are to be employed ; but so to be employed, that external activity shall not hinder repose within. Grace is to be obtained, by fervent energetic prayer : " Ask and it shall be given you ; seek and ye shall find ; knock and it shall be opened unto you." Grace is to be employed, with unremitting assiduity : " Work out," says the apostle, " your own salvation, for it is God that worketh in you, of his own good pleasure, both to will and to do." Grace is to be cherished with delicacy : " Grieve not the Spirit, quench not the Spirit." Grace is to pro-

we should be unsafe. (8) When the Children of Israel were fed with manna in the wilderness, they were supplied from day to day; no store, no accumulation, was permitted: and the reason was, that they might practically imbibe a reliance on divine Providence. Now, so it is, also, in the economy of grace: grace for to-morrow, is not given us to-day; grace for the next hour, is not accorded to us in the present. So wisely, and so beneficially, are matters ordered, that our very helplessness and dependance are thus made the occasion, and the motive, of continual watchfulness, of cheerful activity, and, above all, of deep, of earnest, and of instant prayer.

NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

(1) Page 325.] This principle is, in fact, the essence of faith, hope, and charity: or, in the apostle's phrase, it is *Faith energetic through love*¹.

We are told, by the great Doctor of grace, that the divine law itself killeth, unless we are quickened by the Spirit of God; which, again, is operative, not by hearing, but obeying; not by study, but by love².

The process, then, is simply this: by faith, we implore God's mercy, to impart, what he enjoins; and, through the sweetness of divine grace, to make obedience more delightful, than any profit or pleasure of the opposite course³.

The results are beautifully given, by a writer of the last age:—

'But come; since you are so much afraid of hardships in religion, there is a way, known indeed to few,—one secret way, of avoiding them.

'How? And yet be saved?

'Or else, I am sure, the secret will be worth little. But you are too well instructed in sound principles of piety, to

¹ Πιστις δὲ ἀγάπης ενεργουμένη. — Gal. v. 6.

² 'Lex Dei atque doctrina, quamvis sancta, et justa, et bona, tamen occidit, si non vivificet Spiritus; per quem fit, non ut audiendo, sed ut obediendo, neque ut lectione, sed ut dilectione, teneatur.'—S. Augustin. Ep. ccxvii. cap. iv. Op. Tom. ii. p. 803. edit. Benedict.

³ 'Per fidem, confugiat [anima] ad misericordiam Dei, ut det quod jubet; atque, inspiratâ gratiæ suavitate, per Spiritum Sanctum, faciat plus delectare quod præcipit, quam delectat quod impedit.'—Ibid.

think there can be any safe way, of obtaining a share in that happiness, which the Redeemer has purchased, without submitting to the burthen of obeying his commandments.

‘ However, you are desirous to hear it.

‘ In a word it is *love*.

‘ *Love Him* ; and, then, your obedience will be no burthen to you. The commands of Christ must be obeyed : but you may be eased of what is troublesome and difficult in this obedience, if you can get your heart touched with this divine affection.

‘ Observe, what a wonderful effect this sentiment of love is capable of producing, in those persons, whose hearts are tender, and susceptible of deep impressions : how great an alteration it makes, not only in the course of their conduct, but in their very sensations and judgment. They think nothing too much, which they can do, or undergo, for the sake of the beloved person. They give up their own inclination and interest, even with pleasure. The hardest things become easy, the most irksome offices delightful, near the object of their affection. They are not tired of their assiduities, or greedy of any recompense for them : happy, so long as they are able to please ; and amply rewarded, in the very performance, and the kind acceptance, of their services.

‘ How unlike are all those, who serve for hire ? No matter how little they do, provided you will but be content with it. There is, in their motions, a sluggishness, a reluctance, that perpetually demands the spur. In brief, they are not serving you, but themselves. Neither side is pleased ; your business, is but ill discharged, and their employment is one continual struggle against difficulties.

‘ Many excellent things have been spoken, and very justly, of many excellent graces, and virtues : but there is none of them, to be compared with that which is here recommended to you. It is the first, and great commandment. It is that, on which hang all the law and the prophets ; and that,

finally, on which, above all things, your own happiness depends.

“There be nine things, which I have judged in mine heart to be happy; and the tenth, I will utter. A man that hath joy of his children; and he that liveth to see the fall of his enemy: that dwelleth with a wife of understanding; and that hath not slipped with his tongue: that hath not served a man more unworthy than himself; that hath found prudence; that speaketh in the ears of him that will hear; how great is he, that findeth wisdom? And none of these, is above him that feareth the Lord: but *the Love of the Lord* passeth all things; he that holdeth it, to whom shall he be likened?”

‘To none indeed on earth: but he may be likened to those happy spirits above, that encompass the throne of God; who, seeing Him as He is, are filled with the light of his countenance. And he shall be joined, in due time to their society; and, with them, worship, serve, and possess the supreme object of his affections; the source and author of every thing that is fair, and good, and lovely; and the boundless ocean, to which it all returns, and, in which, it will be swallowed up, and yet not lost, for ever.’ — Ogden, IX Sermon. on Prayer.

(2) Page 327.] The judgment of the primitive church, as might naturally have been expected, is in complete accordance with that of the apostle.

The Fathers were by no means satisfied, either with an imaginary, or merely outward, righteousness; they sought after a real, and intrinsic change. It was not enough, that a man should be *accounted* just; he must really *be made* so. And, while all self-fabricated righteousness was unequivocally discarded, the righteousness of God, the righteousness communicated by God, was invariably described, not as notional, but as solid, substantial, and proceeding from that Spirit which giveth inward life. On this subject, the writings of

S. Augustine are particularly full, and satisfactory. Some passages are given in the margin ¹.

How thoroughly the Church of England is, on this subject, imbued with the spirit of the ancient church, will be seen, in the following extract from one of her ablest divines.

'Unto that assent of faith, or belief in Christ, whereby the just shall live, such a knowledge of him, and of his attributes, is required, as shall enstamp our wills and affections, with the living image of his goodness, and imitable perfections, as truly, as matters merely speculative, imprint their shape upon the understanding, or objects visible, theirs upon the eye. And the perfection of this knowledge, consists in such an impression of Christ's similitude, as the seal leaves on the wax. Our knowledge of moral objects, and especially of divine objects, which are essentially good as true, is imperfect, unless it include a solid impression of their goodness, as well as a superficial resemblance of their truth.

'We may define the Faith, by which the just doth live, to be a firm, and constant assent, or adherence, unto the mercies, and loving-kindness, of the Lord; or, generally, to the spiritual food, exhibited in his sacred word, as much better than this life itself, and all the contentments, of which it is

¹ *Nemo ei dicit sic hominem factum ut de justitiâ quidem posset in peccatum ire, et de peccato ad justitiam redire non posset; sed ut in peccatum iret sufficit ei liberum arbitrium; ut autem redeat ad justitiam opus habet medico, quoniam sanus non est, opus habet vivificatore, quia mortuus est.*

Ad peccatum valet mors animæ quam deseruit vita sua, hoc est Deus ejus, quæ necesse est mortua opera faciat, donec Christi gratiâ reviviscat. —De Naturâ et Gratiâ. cap. xxlii. Tom. x. p. 138.

Questionem mihi proposui de gratiâ Novi Testamenti, propter quam Verbum caro factum est; id est, qui Filius Dei erat, homo factus est, naturam suscipiendo nostram, non amittendo suam. Per quod et nobis recipientibus eum potestas daretur, ut qui eramus homines, filii Dei fieremus, participatione incommutabilis boni in melius commutati, non ad temporalem felicitatem, sed ad vitæ æternæ quæ sola beata est adoptionem. —Lib. ad Honorat. Ep. cxi. cap. xxxviii. Tom. ii. p. 454.

capable; an adherence, grounded on a taste, or relish of the sweetness of this spiritual food, wrought in the soul, or heart of man, by the Spirit of Christ. The expressions are for the most part, the prophet David's; not metaphorical, as some may fancy; much less, equivocal; but proper, and homogeneous to the subject defined. For, whatever internal affinity, or real identity of meaning, there is, or can be, between life temporal, and immortal, the same may be found, between food spiritual, and corporal.

‘Since our Lord Jesus Christ, is as the abridgement, or visible model, of his Father’s incomprehensible goodness; since Christ’s heavenly disposition, is the pattern or archetype, after whose similitude a Christian’s life must be framed, we may then be rightly said to believe his incarnation, life, death, and passion, when, as the apostle speaks, the same mind is in us, which was in him; when we are not only willing to lay down our lives for the brethren, as he did his for us, but when our lives and conversations entirely express the true proportion of that absolute perfection, which shined in his human nature, as it did in the glory of the Godhead.’—Dr. Thomas Jackson. Works, vol. i. pp. 664. 667. 683.

(3) Page 329.] ‘The habitation and resting-place of the Spirit, is humility, love, meekness, and all the other commandments of the Lord. He, therefore, who wishes truly to please God, and to receive from Him the heavenly grace, and to increase and be made perfect in the Spirit, ought, first of all, to force himself to cultivate all the virtues which are commanded, even against the will of the heart. For, as much as any one forces and compels himself to perseverance in prayer, until he rightly performs it, so, also, should he force and compel himself to the exercise of each separate virtue, until he establishes a solid habit of the same. And then, having besought the Lord with earnest supplication, and having, at length, obtained the object of his prayer, the

grace of the Spirit, which has been imparted to him, will grow and flourish in him; and, delighting in his humility, and all his other virtues, will teach him true humility, and true love, and true meekness; all which he had before vainly sought and laboured for, even with violence to himself. And, having increased, and been made perfect by God, he will be accounted worthy to become an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. For the lowly man never falls; for whither should he fall, who is already below all men? Wherefore, pride is, indeed, great lowness¹; but humility, great exaltation, dignity, and honour. Let us, then, practise and force ourselves to humbleness of mind, however adverse our hearts may be to it: praying and beseeching the Lord always, with faith, hope, and love, in a firm expectation that He will send his Spirit into our hearts, that we may pray, and offer up our adorations, in the Spirit, to the Father; and that the Spirit may pray in us, and may teach us true prayer, true lowliness, meekness, love, pity, kindness, all which things we are not able to effect even with violence; and that it may teach us, to perform all the commandments of the Lord, in truth, without labour, and without effort; according as the Spirit knows how to fill us with its fruits. And thus, the Divine commands being accomplished in us, by the Spirit itself, which alone knows the will of Christ, and cleanses us from the defilement of sin, it may present us to Christ, sightly, pure, and spotless brides, that so we may rest in God, and Christ in us, for ever and ever! — Macarius on Christian Perfection. B. I. ch. xviii. p. 29.

¹ A corresponding maxim is contained in a Hebrew epigram, in Ouseley's Oriental Collections; of which the following is a translation:—

Boast not thy power, thou man of might!
For downfall is the fruit of height.
Thou man of grief! endure thy woes,
For after labour comes repose.

(4) Page 331.] Ipsa est Justitia ex fide, quâ credimus nos justificari, hoc est, justos fieri gratiâ Dei per Jesum Christum, Dominum nostrum, ut inveniamur in eo, non habentes nostram justitiam, quæ ex lege est, sed ea quæ est per fidem Christi. Quæ ex Deo Justitia, in fide, in fide utique est quâ credimus, nobis Justitiam divinitus dari, non a nobis, in nobis, nostris viribus fieri.

Nam cur illam justitiam, quæ ex lege est, suam dixit Apostolus, non ex Deo? Quasi Lex non sit ex Deo? Quis hoc nisi impius senserit? Sed quia Lex per literam jubet, non per Spiritum juvat, quicumque sic audit literam legis, ut ei sufficere videatur cognovisse quid jubeat aut prohibeat, quo id se arbitrii sui virtute impleturum esse confidat, nec fide confugiat ad Spiritum vivificantem, ne reum factum litera occidat;—is profecto zelum Dei habet, sed non secundum scientiam. Ignorans enim Dei justitiam, id est, eam quæ datur ex Deo, et suam volens constituere, ut tantummodo ex lege sit, justitiæ Dei non est subjectus.

Cum ergo fides impetrat justitiam, sicut unicuique Deus partitus est etiam ipsius mensuram fidei, non gratiam Dei aliquid meriti præcedit humani, sed ipsa gratia meretur augeri, ut auctâ mereatur perfici, comitante, non ducente, pedissequâ, non præviâ, voluntate.—S. August. Tom. ii. Ep. clxxxvi. p. 665.

(5) Page 336.] Quæstionem mihi proposui de gratiâ Novi Testamenti, propter quam Verbum caro factum est; id est, qui Filius Dei erat, homo factus est, naturam suscipiendo nostram, non amittendo suam. Per quod, et nobis recipientibus eum potestas daretur, ut qui eramus homines, filii Dei fieremus, participatione incommutabilis boni in melius commutati; non ad temporalem felicitatem, sed vitæ æternæ quæ sola beata est adoptionem.—S. August. Lib. ad Honorat. Ep. cxi. cap. xxxviii. Tom. ii. p. 454.

(6) Page 337.] Nec ideo tamen de hâc re [Dei gratiâ] solis votis agendum est, ut non subinferatur, adnitendo, etiam nostræ efficacia voluntatis. Adjutor enim noster, Deus dicitur, nec adjuvari potest, nisi qui etiam aliquid spontè conatur, quia non sicut in lapidibus insensatis, salutem nostram Deus operatur in nobis.—S. August. de Pec. & Mer. II. v. ad fin.

(7) Page 338.] Τη ἀγιωτάτῃ ὑμῶν πιστεὶ ἐποικοδομουντες ἑαυτοῦς.—S. Jude 20. See Rom. xv. 2.

Εἰς οἰκοδομὴν ἑαυτοῦ ἐν ἀγαπῇ.—Ephes. iv. 16.

Οἰκοδομεῖτε εἰς τὸν ἑνα.—1 Thess. v. 11.

(8) Page 339.] “Cum timore et tremore vestram ipsorum salutem speramini : Deus enim est qui operatur in vobis, et velle et operari pro bonâ voluntate.” Quare ergo “Cum timore et tremore,” et non potius cum securitate, si Deus operatur ? Nisi quia propter voluntatem nostram, sine quâ bene non possumus operari, cito potest subrepere animo humano, ut quod bene operatur suum tantummodò existimet.—S. August. de Nat. et Grat. cap. xxvii. ad fin.

A
CHARGE,
DELIVERED TO THE
CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF LIMERICK,
AT THE
PRIMARY VISITATION,
IN
THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF SAINT MARY,
ON
THURSDAY, THE 19TH OF JUNE, 1823.

DUBLIN: RICHARD MILLIKEN. MDCCCXXIII.

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TO THE
VERY REVEREND
ARTHUR J. PRESTON, A.M.
DEAN OF LIMERICK,
AND TO
THE REVEREND THE CLERGY
OF THE
DIOCESE OF LIMERICK,
THIS CHARGE,
PUBLISHED AT THEIR DESIRE,
IS
RESPECTFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY
INSCRIBED.

A C H A R G E,

&c. &c.

 REVEREND BRETHREN,

CALLED, as I have unexpectedly been, from the care of a retired country parish, to the most arduous office in the Christian ministry, I cannot, for the first time, meet the assembled clergy of this diocese, without deep anxiety, lest, through the manifold deficiencies under which I labour, any mischief may arise to the portion of Christ's flock committed to my charge. But, whatever be the deficiencies of the man, I must not shrink from the duties of the Bishop; and, among the very first of these duties, it holds a high place, that I should premonish and exhort you, my fellow-labourers, to cultivate the spirit of your ministry, and to show forth that spirit, in the faithful discharge of the pastoral care. It is my hope, that, both at

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this time, and in all our future intercourse, I may be enabled to speak with meekness and brotherly love: and it is my earnest desire, not merely that you should receive with candour and docility the advice which I am bound to offer, but that you, in your turn, should assist me with that friendly counsel, which your experience must, in many instances, qualify you to give.

This mutual interchange of thoughts between a bishop and his clergy, desirable always and every where, is, at the present time, and in this district, peculiarly important and indispensable. The dangers menacing the Church and Christianity at large, the difficulties besetting the clerical order throughout the south of Ireland, and not least in this extensive diocese, great and alarming as they long have been, are become too notorious, to demand any special notice of them on this occasion. You know, you feel, and you deplore them. And, I am confident, you will agree with me, that these difficulties and dangers afford a strong additional reason, why we should "speak often one to another," in the language of advice, encouragement, and admonition. The unexampled union of our adversaries (united probably but in this one thing) calls for unanimity and concert

among ourselves; unanimity and concert, not for any party objects, nor in a controversial spirit, but for the moral and spiritual improvement of ourselves, with a further view to the moral and spiritual improvement of those intrusted to our care: that, through the Divine blessing on our joint endeavours, we may grow stronger in the principles of our common faith, richer in the consolations of religious hope, and more abundant in the fruits of Christian charity. Be this, then, our union, this our confederation, that we will provoke and encourage one another to encounter opposition, by the only legitimate weapons of our professional warfare; by devotedness to our sacred calling, and by diligence, each in his appointed sphere. Opportunities are not, and never can be, wanting. The present is an occasion, when all may meet and converse with all. In your respective neighbourhoods again, individual clergymen may, without any formal premeditated plan, enjoy the frequent benefit of mutual advice and counsel. And, to guard against the possibility of disappointment to those of the clergy, who, at any time, may wish for conference with me, I have set apart the Wednesday in every week to receive them; and will provide, that, during any absence of mine, they shall be regularly

met on that day, at the Palace, by the Vicar-General of the diocese. From strict adherence to this arrangement, I anticipate much convenience to the clergy; much advantage, in the regular dispatch of all diocesan business; and much economy, to yourselves, my Reverend Brethren, as well as to me, in the precious article of time. For, I trust, that both parties can and will employ themselves more advantageously, than in ceremonious calls, and unproductive interviews.

On the nature of our appropriate employments, I shall confine myself to a few plain and simple observations. But, in the first place, and as the foundation of all that is to follow, I must remind myself, and remind you, that we are, above all things, to cultivate the spirit of the Christian priesthood. What this spirit is, no clergyman can be at a loss to determine, who bears in mind (as all clergymen ought to do) the solemn and awakening language of our ordination services. The questions there proposed, the answers there returned, the petitions there preferred, the exhortations there delivered, the passages of Scripture there selected, all bear testimony, that the spirit of the Christian priesthood, is a spirit of prayer, a spirit of devotedness to God, a spirit of deadness to the world, a

spirit of zeal for the salvation of immortal souls. And, when we remember (and what true Christian pastor ever can forget?) the engagements, which, at our dedication to the ministry, we voluntarily formed, our hearts must surely burn within us, that we may approve ourselves faithful servants of the Best of Masters. On this topic, then, I will no further enlarge, than by recommending, as I do most earnestly, to your periodical study, the offices for the ordering of deacons and priests (1); a study, from which the most aged and experienced minister has much to learn; and by which the most youthful may soon grow wiser than his teachers.

Where the spirit of our ministry is properly imbibed, exhortation will be little needful to diligence in the first great division of professional employment; that is, 'in reading of the Holy Scriptures, and in such studies as help to the knowledge of the same.' The clergyman whose heart is in his calling, will, indeed, be habitually mindful, what a solemn vow, promise, and profession he has made, to be diligent in these things, and, for them, 'to forsake the study of the world and the flesh.' But his promise, if we may so speak, will be absorbed in the performance of it. He will be studious of God's Word, because,

a relish and a fragrance upon the mind, and the remembrance of them is sweet¹.

To attempt even the most rapid and superficial sketch of a plan of theological study, within the narrow limits to which I am confined, and amidst the numerous topics which have a claim on our attention, would be neither acting respectfully toward you, nor doing common justice to a most important subject. For the present, therefore, I will simply remind you, that the study of divinity comprises two great departments; neither of which can be neglected by a conscientious minister. I mean, the critical, and the practical: the critical department, comprehensively viewed, embracing whatever relates to the grammatical, historical, and doctrinal interpretation of Scripture; the evidences, also, of our holy faith; the controversies which, from time to time, have agitated the Church; and, in a word, all those branches of Christian Theology, in which the intellect is principally engaged (2): the practical department, including the devotional study of sacred Scripture, together with the moral and spiritual writings of good and pious men, and particularly the lives of those, who were distin-

¹ Bishop Horne. Preface to Commentary on the Book of Psalms. Works, Vol. ii. page lxi.

guished in their generation, as lights and examples of the Christian world ; in brief, all that reading, which is primarily addressed to the affections, and which is most advantageously pursued in the retirement of the closet. (3) Neither of these departments can be safely neglected: neither, I will add, can be brought to a successful issue, independently of the other: the critical, without the practical, engendering that "knowledge which puffeth up;" the practical, without the critical, enkindling a "zeal not according unto knowledge;" while, from the union of the two, and from that alone, we may reasonably expect the "love which edifieth." And thus much I can venture to say, after no slight consideration of the subject, that the divines most eminent in the profounder and more recondite parts of theological learning, have excelled also, as devotional and practical writers; while, again, those divines, whose works are, by common consent, the devotional manuals of the Christian world, have been largely conversant with most kinds of scriptural and theological information. Those great men, we, in our degree, are bound to imitate. We are not, indeed, nor is it desirable we should be, all of us theological writers; but we are, and we ought to be, all of us Christian pastors. We have all undertaken

the momentous work, to save ourselves, and to save them who hear us: this work, as it respects our hearers, and as it respects ourselves, we cannot possibly fulfil, unless we both understand and feel the words of eternal life; and it is certain, that, without practical reading, we cannot feel, without critical reading, we cannot understand, the great truths of the Gospel.

These remarks may, possibly, be deemed too obvious and familiar, for the ears of such an auditory: but, is it quite certain, that none among those who hear me have need to be thus reminded? I am afraid this cannot be maintained: and, to speak with that openness and candour which become the relation in which we stand, I am pained to say, after no short or superficial acquaintance with the clergy of the south of Ireland, that, while many are most laudably diligent in other professional pursuits, some are but too apt to mistake the conclusion of their academical course, for the completion of their theological studies. A mistake more fatal to all progress in sacred learning can scarcely be imagined; but this is not the whole, nor the worst; for this mistake, wherever it obtains, will not merely impede progress, but preclude the very lowest competence of clerical attainment. The course of studies marked out for undergraduates in our

University, excellent as a preparatory course, is still, but a preparation; and, in the majority of its branches, if not altogether foreign from the learning of our profession, is, at most, very remotely connected with it. Nor, is all the advantage which might be pre-supposed, in the nature of the case derivable from those divinity lectures and examinations, which, for a long course of years, have been established in the University. So great is the influx of attendants, that, after the utmost exertions of the lecturer, but a small portion of direct instruction can fall to the lot of each; and so broken by inevitable intervals are the periods of attendance, that it is hardly possible for the most diligent to attain a regular and systematic view, even of the first elements of theology. And, while I rejoice to think, that several individuals have derived incalculable benefit from the impulse given in the divinity school of Dublin, I am obliged to state, from my own actual knowledge, that some, who came forth from that school, clothed in its first honours, had, in the space of one short year, retrograded rather than advanced; and betrayed a degree of ignorance, which it is painful to think upon.

The simple truth is this, and I particularly wish to impress it on the younger portion of the

clergy, that their professional education can scarcely be said to have commenced, till the period of their taking holy orders: and that, with themselves and with their employment of the first few probationary years, it must principally rest, whether, through the remainder of their lives, they shall be an ornament or a disgrace to their sacred profession. The obstacles in their way, I grant, and I deplore, are many, and hard to be surmounted. But they are by no means *insurmountable*; and, in the cause which we have espoused, nothing short of impossibility should damp our ardour. The want of pecuniary resources, and the consequent want of books, are often most severely felt; but, even here, much may be effected, by zeal, and by exact economy. They who cannot buy books may often borrow them; and they, again, who cannot borrow, may, at length, contrive to buy. Were a young clergyman of scanty means to ask me, ‘How shall I procure books?’ I would reply, ‘Determine, from the outset, that, next to food and raiment, (the simplest food, and least expensive raiment,) you will devote your stipend to the purchase of divinity.’ The result would, in a few years, astonish those, who may be induced to adopt this hint; and I can, in some measure, speak from my own experience in this

matter. But, let not any say, that, for want of books they cannot study. There is not any clergyman, who may not procure a Bible, and some one Commentary; a Greek Testament, and some one Lexicon; a Book of Common Prayer, and some one approved Ritualist. And, with this scanty apparatus, I am bold to say, a diligent and pious clergyman may become no despicable theologian; able to instruct his flock in the sincere word of the Gospel; able also, whenever occasion shall arise, to give a sound and reasonable answer for the faith that is in him. I shall conclude this topic, with one advice to all, but especially to the younger clergy: — *nulla dies sine linea*: let no day pass, in which you shall not study, in the original, some portion of the Scriptures.

But, in the life of a Christian minister, the best study, the study even of the *best of Books*, must be viewed rather as the means, than as the end. Abstractedly considered, it is, indeed, an invaluable end, to be pursued for its own sake, and which, in a modified sense, will become its own "exceeding great reward." But, ministerially considered, it is ancillary to a course of active duties: and, if pursued without reference to that course, study may be a very pleasing self-indulgence, but it ceases to be an appropriate clerical employment. As individual Christians, we may,

and should read for our private edification ; but, as Pastors of the flock of Christ, we must read for this additional purpose, that we may be qualified to instruct and edify others.

You will be mindful, my Reverend Brethren, that you are solemnly responsible to the chief Authorities of this Realm, to the Church of the living God, and to Almighty God himself, for the careful instruction of the flocks committed to your charge ; this instruction you are to supply, indirectly, through the instrumentality of others, and directly, by your own assiduous ministration.

The instruction to be provided through the instrumentality of others ; is, I need scarcely say, to be afforded chiefly through the medium of licensed schools ; one of which, each beneficed clergyman is bound by law, and by the solemnity of an oath, to keep, or cause to be kept, within his parish. Addressed, as I know you have been, on this subject, it is the less needful, that I should at present enlarge upon it. The importance, the necessity, the indispensable duty of providing such establishments, have been most impressively laid before you, by my respected predecessor ; and, while, from the parochial returns, I regret to see, that His Lordship's orders have, in many instances, been as yet uncomplied with, I cannot but entertain a strong hope, that his exertions

will, ere long, be found to have produced their fruit; and that, before the Visitation of next year, schools will rear their heads, in many uninstructed districts. Were I guided solely by what appears on the face of the official returns, I should be compelled to use a severer language. But I have taken largely into account the pecuniary difficulties, and difficulties also of another kind, which have impeded some of the most zealous, in their efforts to establish schools. Nor can I here withhold my grateful testimony, that, amidst unexampled privations, borne, I must say, with exemplary meekness and magnanimity, several of the clergy have shown much anxiety, from their own scanty incomes, and with limited aid from lay-proprietors, to supply that lack of proper education, which so lamentably obtains. Imperfectly acquainted, as I necessarily must be, at this stage of my residence among you, with the circumstances of individual neglect, I am unwilling to hazard individual censure. And, should I be spared to preside at another Visitation, I trust I shall, on this head, be saved the pain, either of remonstrance or infliction, by your prompt and voluntary zeal.

The instruction to be directly supplied, by your own assiduous exertion, may be divided into four leading branches: the Catechetical In-

stitution of youth; the due Administration of the Common Prayer and Sacraments; the public delivery of Sermons from the Pulpit; and private Monitions to the sick, as well as to the whole, within your cures.

On the two latter topics, I will not now address you: each of them would, in itself, demand an elaborate treatise, rather than such brief hints as could be offered in this place. And I the more readily pass them by, as they have been admirably discussed in various works of our best divines; some one or other, at least, of which is, or ought to be, in the hands of every clergyman.

With respect to the Catechetical Institution of youth, I would remind you, that it was the primitive method; employed by the Apostles, and their immediate followers, and, in after ages, by the whole succession of the Catholic and Apostolic Church, for training up and organizing the visible community of Christians, in sound principles of faith, in the love of God and man, and in purity of life and conversation. It is observable accordingly, that, in exact proportion as catechizing has been practised or neglected, in the same proportion have the public faith and morals been seen to flourish, or decline. And the reason of this is obvious; for it is certain, that, even among those who have been regener-

ated in Baptism, and who have received the first infusions of preventing and assisting grace, unless the good seed of religious instruction be early sown, the three great enemies of man, the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, will pre-occupy the ground of the heart, in various kinds and degrees, according to the constitution and circumstances of the recipients, with the tares of irreligion, inhumanity, pride, self-will, or impurity. In the earlier ages of the Church, Catechetical Schools were established in the great cities of the Empire; over which, men of the profoundest learning, and most brilliant talents, felt themselves honoured, when they were called to preside: while each particular Church had its catechists; and the catechumens formed a regular and ascertained class or division of every congregation. And it is not too much to say, that, next to an established liturgy, and beyond all prescribed confessions of faith, the single ordinance of catechetical institution, has, under Providence, been the great stay and support, throughout Christendom, of orthodox unwavering Catholicity. (4)

For a long course of years, both in England and in this country, this ancient and venerable usage had fallen into comparative disuse and neglect: how far the growth, and the dissemination

of erroneous and strange doctrines, which, within the same period, having alarmingly increased, may be attributable to this disuse and neglect, it is not for us precisely to determine:—but the coincidence is remarkable; and from the highest authorities, and I am happy to add, with considerable effect, the revival of catechizing has been recommended and encouraged, as an antidote at once to the opposite evils of enthusiasm and infidelity.

In this particular, I could wish the returns of the rural deans of this diocese had been more precise and definite; and in the course of some time, when I shall have digested and sent round among the clergy a body of inquiries respecting their discharge of the pastoral care, I will hope for more satisfactory information, on this, I had almost said, the most important department of their labours. Meantime, I would exhort them to consider, that not merely regularity, but exertion, is necessary for the proper discharge of this duty. Children, and the parents of children, must be not only invited, but elicited and won to Church; and when there assembled, the parents may be often more instructed and edified, by the simple lessons given to their children, than by the more formal discourses addressed from the pulpit to themselves. For let not the

common prejudice be entertained, that catechizing is a slight and trifling exercise, to be performed without pains and preparation on your part. This would be so, if it were the mere rote-work asking and answering of the questions in our Church Catechism : but to open, to explain, and familiarly to illustrate those questions, in such a manner, as at once, to reach the understanding, and touch the affections, of little children, is a work which demands no ordinary acquaintance, at once with the whole scheme of Christian theology, with the philosophy of the human mind, and with the yet profounder mysteries of the human heart. It has, therefore, been well and truly said, by I recollect not what writer, that *a boy may preach, but to catechize requires a man.*

The next branch of public instruction, which remains to be adverted to, is the right and due Administration of the Common Prayer and Sacraments. A more important subject, or more intimately connected with the religious improvement of a Christian people, can scarcely be imagined. And we accordingly find, that it was weighed with deep and serious thought, both by the framers of our Liturgy, and by the Rulers of the Land. In various offices of our Church, the proper performance of these duties, is dwelt

upon as matter both of prayer and admonition ; and in more than one legislative enactment, it is enjoined and enforced with great solemnity. But, in truth, it is founded on principles antecedent to all liturgies and laws, on the common feeling too, and general consent of mankind, that the worship and adoration of Almighty God should be conducted soberly, gravely, and affectionately, in a manner suitable at once to the wants of those who pray, and to the majesty of Him, who is addressed in prayer. In order to the effectuation of this purpose in our Church, it is indispensable, that the system, the order, and the spirit of our Liturgy, be known and appreciated by those who serve and minister at the altar. And it is a matter of painful regret, not wholly unmingled with surprise, that, in the education of ministers for our communion, very inadequate provision is made, for acquainting them with the history, the grounds, and reasons of our Common Prayer, and for training them to a just and impressive manner of performing the noblest liturgical services, at present, or, I verily believe, at any former period, extant in the Christian world. It is most desirable, that this deficiency should be supplied, by some mutual understanding between the Bishops and the University of Ireland ; and it may not be unreason-

able to hope, that, through their joint exertions, a great and lasting improvement may be effected. In the meanwhile, and for the information of those who may present themselves as candidates for holy orders within this diocese, I think it right to give this public notice, that I will make very special inquiry into their knowledge both historical and critical, of the offices, the rites, and ceremonies of our Church; and into their capacity for reading those offices, and administering those rites and ceremonies, as they ought to be read and administered. And, whatever may be their qualifications in other respects, those who are deficient in this knowledge, and especially those who are not qualified to perform divine service in a clear, devout, and edifying manner, shall never be ordained by me. (5)

In order to attain this manner, it is very advisable that candidates for orders, and, I will add, the younger part of the clergy, should occasionally submit their reading of the Liturgy to those who are more experienced than themselves; requesting a candid statement of any improper habits which they may have contracted: and it might not be amiss, if they were to procure, and study, some one of the treatises which have been published, on the art of reading. At the same time, I would caution them to shun

all elaborate emphasis, all departure from a natural and easy manner, in a word, all affectation of *fine reading*, which is far more offensive to good taste, and right feeling, than any fault compatible with simplicity and nature. And here, may I be permitted to observe, that, while a rapid, careless, and irreverent performance of divine service cannot be too carefully avoided, there is an opposite extreme, into which young clergymen are sometimes apt to fall : intending to be serious, they become sad ; and, meaning to be solemn, they become solemnified ; forgetful, that, after the example of our blessed Lord himself, a chastened hilarity is diffused over the Service of our Church. But this is not the proper place or time for technical remarks. I would rather invite your attention to the wise and weighty words of Bishop Burnet, that ‘ a deep sense of the things prayed for, a true recollection and attention of spirit, and a holy earnestness of soul, will give a composure to the looks, and a weight to the pronounciation, that will be tempered between affectation on the one hand, and levity on the other.’

This sense, this recollection, this attention, this holy earnestness of soul, are peculiarly indispensable, under the circumstances in which most of you, my Reverend Brethren, are placed.

Officiating in small country Churches, to thin congregations, generally confined to the humbler classes of society, collected with difficulty from remote districts, and, consequently, uncertain in their time of attendance, and apt, by their unseasonable entrance, to interrupt and confuse the minister (6), under such circumstances, it is, humanly speaking, very natural (and a deep and strong sense of religion can alone prevent the evil), that many of our parochial clergy should contract slovenly and careless habits, in the performance of divine service. But why do I mention these things? Not, unquestionably, in order to excuse or palliate any such instances of neglect; but with a view to impress more strongly on your minds and hearts, the duty, and the benefit of recollecting, in whose presence, and for what purpose, you are weekly called to minister. Were your congregations large and splendid, were your Churches richly decorated, were all external circumstances fitted to impress the imagination and the senses,—then, indeed, putting all true religious feeling out of the question, a sort of animal magnetism, and that vanity which operates on all, who are not habitually on their guard, might, to a certain degree, supply the place of higher principles, and, even in careless ministers, produce at least the out-

ward semblance of gravity and devotion. But, as it is, your trials are of another kind ; and, far from officiating above your natural tone and temper, you are in perpetual danger of officiating below them. Yet this disadvantage may be converted into an important benefit, if it leads, as it ought to lead you, to cultivate inward piety, in the absence of outward stimulus and excitement : and it will be no delusive touchstone of your attainments in devotion, if you find yourselves, as I trust several of you do, no less disposed to pray with fervour in a deserted country Church, than you would be in a crowded and magnificent Cathedral. Nor can I omit the encouraging assurance, that, what you who lose in extensiveness of sphere, may be more than counterpoised, by intensiveness of feeling. A crowd is rarely favourable to composure of mind, and recollectedness of spirit ; and I know of nothing in the pomp and circumstance of assembled myriads, comparable to that still small voice of our Redeemer, " Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

Nor is this the only encouragement. For I can state with absolute certainty, that, in the remotest district, the smallest church, and the thinnest congregation, the service of our Esta-

blishment will be interesting and attractive, if only there be reasonable qualifications and proper attention on the part of the officiating clergyman. There is a dignified simplicity in our public worship, which makes it independent of all merely local circumstances, which accommodates it alike to the many and the few. And I shall never forget the testimony of a Roman Catholic foreigner, long habituated to the splendid ritual of her own communion, as exhibited on the Continent, that the most awful and impressive ceremony she had ever witnessed, was the administration of the Lord's Supper, to about twelve communicants, by a single minister, in a plain, retired, Irish country Church. Believe me, my Reverend Brethren, it is in your power to do incalculable good, by attention to particulars, which, at the first view, may appear unimportant; but which by the wisest men, most deeply versed in human nature, have been pronounced of the utmost moment. Such are, the cleanness, freshness, and ventilation of your Churches; a fair and moderate attention to the accommodation of your parishioners in their pews; the neat and accurate order of the communion plate and cloths; of the reading-desk and pulpit; of the vestments provided by the parish; and, let me add, of those parts of the clerical dress to be supplied by your-

selves; for, while I am apprehensive, that, in many parish Churches, the clergymen use no other habiliments than a surplice, not always in the best repair, I must make it a particular request, that every member of this diocese will provide himself with a decent black gown; and that all beneficed clergymen who are masters of arts, or of any superior degree, and all who, by chaplaincies, or otherwise, are entitled to the distinction, may, with their surplices, wear scarfs or tippets. (7) The senses and imagination are constituent parts of our nature; these, no less than the reason and affections, are to be enlisted in the service of religion; and if, through any neglect of ours, they fail to become the auxiliaries, it is but too probable they will become the active and successful foes, of our most holy faith. But, on this subject, I must add no more. It is proper, however, that I should thus publicly announce my intention, of occasionally visiting, during divine service on Sundays, the country Churches of this diocese; being satisfied, that this is the most effectual method which a Bishop can adopt, of correcting abuses, if, in any case, they may unhappily exist;—and of encouraging those habits of decency and order, which, I am bound to hope, are prevalent in most parishes under my superintendence.

And, bold as it may seem, I shrink not from the assertion, that, in several important respects, the established clergy of the South, are by no means a less useful, and incomparably a more influential body, than their brethren of the North of Ireland. For, what are the respective circumstances of these two divisions of the country? In the North,—an affluent and educated resident gentry; an intelligent, industrious yeomanry; a thriving manufacture, which gives employment to all classes of the population; a general diffusion of knowledge, through the instrumentality of schools, which are liberally maintained; and, in addition to the established pastors of the land, a body of Presbyterian teachers, whose naturally strong minds have been trained to investigation, in academical institutions, both at home, and in the neighbouring country of North Britain. In the South, on the contrary, and not least in the county where our lot is principally cast, the great aristocracy, and the hereditary proprietors of the soil, for the most part, absentees; a starving, ill-educated, unemployed, and most redundant peasantry: no capitalised farmers, no independent yeomanry, no established manufacture; of schools an abundance indeed, (for the people of Munster have a deep thirst after knowledge,) but schools so wretchedly supported, so ill-supplied with books,

and altogether so unhappily circumstanced, that, it is to be apprehended, they are sources rather of mischief than of benefit; while the moral, intellectual, and religious advantages derivable from a graduated scale of society, descending, by due steps, from the highest to the lowest rank and order, is totally wanting. Now, let the condition of the North, and the condition of the South of Ireland, be justly brought to bear upon the question of the comparative influence and utility of the established clergy in the one province, as contra-distinguished from the other, and at what other conclusion can we arrive than this,—that, morally and politically speaking, the influence of the clergy in the North, is merged in that of the nobility, gentry, farmers, manufacturers, Presbyterian teachers, yea, and of the population themselves: while, throughout the South, (some districts affording an exception, which serves only to establish the rule,) the clergy have the melancholy pre-eminence of being, I had almost said, the single class to whom the people look up, for relief in their distresses, for counsel in their difficulties, and, in too many districts, for common honesty, and civility, in the ordinary transactions of life. Thus situated, their influence is, of necessity, very considerable: and, in most parishes, the poorer inhabitants feel, that the rector is to

them the most important individual in the neighbourhood. But this pre-eminence is far from being matter of undue complacency. For, in the vast majority of instances, our clergy are left alone and unsupported, with every unfavourable circumstance to counteract their exertions, and cripple their powers; and, at this disadvantage, (with one only aid, to which I shall presently advert,) are not only expected, but feel themselves conscientiously bound, to bear the whole burthen and heat of the day. In this matter, I speak dispassionately: without any partiality, I trust, or undue bias; and (may I presume to add?) with tolerably favourable opportunities of forming an opinion. Born and educated in the northern division of Ireland, my first sphere of employment as a clergyman, was also there. For nearly twenty years, I have been since resident in Munster, a retired, but not unobservant spectator of what was passing around me. And I feel myself perfectly safe in the assertion, that, while the clergy of the north of Ireland yield, perhaps, to no established clergy throughout Christendom in the efficient discharge of their *pastoral* duties,—they have a comparatively narrow field of *economical* exertion: and that, while the clergy of the South, have, in most instances, but few claims upon them of a strictly profes-

sional kind, they are furnished with inexhaustible sources of employment, in supplying the wants, and soothing the feelings, and promoting the comforts, and improving the habits, and softening down the animosities, of a people redundant almost to mutual extinction, and with whom it seems to be the question, who shall procure ground enough whereon to vegetate, and who shall perish for want of space wherein to lay their heads?

How they have discharged, and are discharging, these important functions, it is not for one of their own order to pronounce. But this I will say, that, if the enemies of the Church should succeed in their unholy efforts, the people of this country would speedily learn, by the sad and sure privation of great, though unostentatious benefits, who have been their best and most unwearied benefactors. It is not till the stream has been cut off, that we can estimate its fertilizing power: it is not till the sun has been eclipsed, that we can appreciate the lustre of his beams. But they that are for us, are more and mightier than they that are against us. Let us, therefore, only increase and persevere, in the quiet performance of our duty, and we need not fear the result. For, though we be encompassed with chariots and horses, arrayed against us in

the ranks of battle, — yet if we are true to ourselves, our eyes will be opened; and we too, like the servant of the Lord's prophet, shall behold the mountain full of *horses of fire, and chariots of fire.*

One public service of our southern clergy, and but one, I will here advert to; because, in so doing, I shall at once, recommend the continuance and extension of that service, and confess a debt of gratitude due in another quarter. The unexampled distress of our suffering population in the course of last year, and the munificent liberality exerted in their behalf by the inhabitants of our Sister Island, are still fresh in your remembrance. The bounty thus bestowed, was, we most gratefully acknowledge, so far as respects this county, (and the same, I am confident, may be said respecting other counties,) administered with equal judgment and impartiality, by that Committee in this city, to whose labours we are unspeakably indebted: but local channels were indispensable, through which those streams of mercy might safely flow. And how valuable, in this respect, was the instrumentality of the parochial clergy, the poor of every district in this county are best qualified to declare. But their labours have not yet terminated; I trust, it may be said, they have

yet scarcely commenced. The overflowings of British bounty more than covered the emergencies of the last year; and what remains, has been most judiciously allotted by the London Committee, to the encouragement of industry, and, so far as practicable, the establishment of manufactures, amongst us. In this department too, the clergy have been foremost among the most efficient agents; and I am happy to recognize some of the youngest members of this diocese, as pre-eminent in this good and charitable work. (8) I exhort *them* (though, in their case, exhortation is little needful) to persevere: I exhort *others* to follow their example: and I cannot forbear expressing my earnest hope, and strong persuasion, that, through the continuance of such exertions, the condition of this unfortunate, but not unimproveable country, will, ere long, experience a happy alteration.

Nor, let me here omit, what I have already indirectly intimated, that the established clergy of this Province, have, in this, as well as in other respects, been aided by a band of valuable coadjutors: I mean the Roman Catholic priesthood. Zealous to promote the temporal, and, according to their views, the spiritual welfare of their flocks, they have shown themselves not only willing, but desirous, to co-operate for the

public advantage, with their brethren of the Church of England. In discountenancing, and, to the best of their power, extinguishing the spirit of delusion which had gone forth among too many of their people, their efforts have been most praiseworthy, and, all things considered, in no small degree, successful. Nor should I do common justice to what I think and feel upon the subject, if I were to leave unnoticed the seasonable and pious pastoral exhortation of the venerable prelate, who, in this city, presides over the Roman Catholic Church¹. The assistance of such men, animated by such motives, we should always feel happy to receive, and to acknowledge. And I speak from some experience on the subject, when I add, that it is quite within the bounds of easy practicability, that the clergy of our Church, and the priesthood of theirs, should harmoniously co-operate for the preservation of good morals, good order, and public tranquillity, within their common neighbourhood. Let me not, however, be misunderstood. *Ours is a substantive religion*: and I do by no means recommend, that we should, in any degree, compromise or compliment away our principles or our belief. We ought, on all fitting occasions, manfully to assert,

¹ [The late Rt. Rev. Charles Tuohy, D.D.]

and fearlessly defend, that faith, which, we are persuaded, is the faith of the true Catholic and Apostolic Church; the same privilege, we ought, on the principles, I will not say, of toleration, but of Christian liberty, to allow our brethren of the Church of Rome; and, while we thus honestly agree to differ, we should, with all charity, endeavour to maintain unity of spirit, in the bond of peace. But, on this subject, I gladly avail myself of a higher authority, and of better language, than my own: language, addressed, about thirty years ago, by one of the ablest defenders of our Church establishment, the public-spirited BISHOP WOODWARD, to his clergy of the diocese of Cloyne:—‘It is incumbent on you to keep up the most cordial intercourse with the Roman Catholic Clergy of your respective parishes, the better to effect the great object which you have in common,—the promotion of piety, good morals, and public order, and charity; and, by that example, to lead your parishioners to meet their Roman Catholic neighbours, in the various departments into which they are now introduced, without discontent or jealousy, for the better execution of the several branches of our internal policy: you should exhort them, to do credit to their profession by liberality of mind; allowing to

the votaries of the Romish Church, the same privilege of private judgment, which the founders of Protestantism asserted for themselves, when they separated from that communion. You should exhort them, to contend with the Roman Catholic, not for enmity, but emulation; to aim at superiority, not by reviling or undervaluing, but by excelling him,—by being better citizens, and better Christians. In this glorious contest, they who are contending for the prize, will not only improve themselves, but learn to love, and to esteem each other;—to esteem their competitor the more for that very opposition, which is dictated by zeal for religion, and conducted by its spirit.' Thus far BISHOP WOODWARD: and I cannot help expressing my earnest wish, that such healing sentiments were, at this time, proclaimed from every pulpit, and every altar, in the land. Then would animosities rapidly subside; and the spirit of brotherly affection would move upon the troubled face of our country.

And now, Reverend Brethren, before I close this address, there are two subjects which I would briefly recommend to your most serious attention; the one, lying at the very foundation of ministerial usefulness; the other, intimately connected with the due maintenance of the

ministerial character ; and both of them so interwoven with my settled conviction of what a clergyman ought to be, that, on this occasion, silence respecting them would be criminal.

The first of these subjects, is that of *Residence on your several Cures*. From the diocesan returns, I find, that, in this particular, this diocese will admit of some improvement. Particular cases will, doubtless, demand particular inquiry : and the evil of non-residence may, in various instances, be either enhanced or alleviated, by circumstances which do not appear on the face of the report. On this account, I do not intend, at the present Visitation, to make any specific order, respecting any individual non-resident ; for it is my desire, at the outset, to exercise all due circumspection and deliberation, that, in the sequel, I may be enabled to act with consistency and firmness. Before a year shall have elapsed, I trust there will be fewer cases even of apparent dereliction of duty ; and with a view, in the mean season, to diminish, if possible, the number, I think it my duty to give this public warning, that, if spared to meet you again in this place, I shall do so, prepared to exercise all the power which the laws have given me, for enforcing the residence of those who shall not have become voluntary residents.

And here, I would be understood to refer, not only to those who absent themselves wholly from their proper spheres of duty, but to those also, who may reside on benefices which they hold elsewhere. The dispensations given in such cases, precisely stipulate for an alternate residence on both preferments; and the circumstances must be very peculiar indeed, under which I shall feel myself at liberty to remit the portion of residence legally required, on livings held by faculty in this diocese¹. Few counties suffer more from absenteeism, than this county of Limerick. But, of all absentees, clerical absentees are the least to be tolerated: for the services to be performed by a parochial minister are unspeakably more important, than the services of any lay-proprietor; and, setting apart, for the moment, all ecclesiastical considerations, an income derived and paid, as the incomes of the clergy are, ought, above all other kinds of property, to be expended on the spot where it is raised. I have already alluded to the privations under which the clergy of this diocese have laboured, and still do labour. Allowance, on this account, should be liberally made, for those who do not reside, because they have not the

¹ In this particular, the Bishops have since been deprived of authority, by an Act of Parliament passed in 1824.

means of residing. But such privations, I trust, are no more than temporary. And, when the present fluctuation shall have subsided, and the property of the Church, in common with all other property, shall have reverted to its natural channel, I am very hopeful, that the good sense and good feeling of all who are beneficed in this diocese, will spare me the pain of resorting, in a single instance, to those compulsory measures, which nothing but an imperious sense of duty could impel me to pursue.

In speaking of residence, I must advert to the *occasional* and *indispensable* absence of those, who *do* habitually reside, and perform their own duty. In all such cases, I request, that the intended absence, and the cause of it, may be notified to me, or, if I should be from home, to the Vicar General; and that the clergyman may distinctly specify, how he proposes to have his cure served. It is, in my judgment, indispensable, for the right discipline of the diocese, that no minister should officiate within it, who is not licensed, or, at least, permitted by the diocesan. By this rule (the canonical rule, be it observed, of our Church) it is my determination to abide. And it is my desire, that all unbeneficed clergymen appointed to curacies, may take out licenses; which the Registrar has orders to prepare.

My last subject, on which I will detain you but for a few moments, is the question of *allowable clerical recreations*. Constituted as our nature is, it is necessary, that, when fatigued and exhausted by exertions bodily or mental, we should recruit ourselves by some innocent amusement. But the choice of recreation is a far more important matter than the world is commonly aware of; and, in the first place, on this account, that our chosen amusements serve at once to indicate, and to confirm, the dispositions and character of the man. In what is commonly called the business of life, we are, to a considerable degree, involuntary agents; our occupations are determined for us; and, if we would succeed in our various professions, those occupations we must sedulously pursue. But recreations are purely matter of choice; in this particular, we are entirely at our own disposal; and whoever wishes to estimate the temper and turn, of the mind of any individual, will do well to inquire, not how he passes his hours of business, but how he spends his intervals of leisure. This important principle, clergymen, above all others, ought to have habitually in view: and this matter will, perhaps, afford a good criterion by which they may judge of their moral and spiritual state. For, if their chosen amusements be, on the one hand, coarse

and boisterous, or, on the other, frivolous and trifling, they will have but too much reason to suspect themselves; and to scrutinize narrowly the thoughts, the intents, and the desires, of their own minds and hearts.

Respecting the amusements of clergymen, our Church, in the forty-second Irish Canon, lays down a rule, very distinct and important in itself; and which contains within it, express provision for a yet more extended application of its principle. By this Canon it is enjoined, upon all ecclesiastical persons, that they 'shall not spend their time idly by day or by night; nor shall give themselves to playing at dice, cards, or tables, or any other game unbecoming their functions; always doing things which shall appertain to honesty, and endeavouring to profit the Church of God;—having always in mind, that they ought to excel others in purity of life, and should be examples to the people to live well and Christianly.' Now, this part of the Canon, being founded on reasons of immutable morality, is, therefore, of perpetual obligation; and it is my hope and my desire, that the clergy of this diocese may conform themselves not merely to the letter, but to the spirit of it; and that, not for wrath, but for conscience sake.

To speak my sentiments plainly, (for in all

my intercourse with you, I shall be plain and simple,) I do not see how a clergyman, consistently with the sacredness and separation of his character and office, consistently with the edification of the flock committed to his charge, or consistently with the vows which he has made at his ordination, can pursue the sports of the mountain or the field; can resort to the race-ground or the theatre; can be found at the card-table, or in the ball-room. In avowing these sentiments, I avow the sentiments, which, from the earliest ages of the Church, have been maintained alike by the old Catholic Bishops and Fathers, and by the most distinguished and illustrious Churchmen of modern times. In these sentiments I have lived; in these sentiments I hope to die; and, at the close of life, it will be to me a crown of rejoicing, if, through my humble instrumentality, any of you, my Reverend Brethren, shall be induced to become like-minded; and to consider, even in their most unguarded hours, what gravity and recollectedness, are, at all times, and in all places, demanded of our sacred order.

But let me not here be misapprehended:—Christianity is a religion not only of *peace*, but of *joy*; and a faithful minister of Christ, ought to be the happiest and the most cheerful of

human beings. He is not precluded, he ought not to preclude himself, from indulging, at proper seasons, an innocent gaiety of heart: and by showing himself at home and at ease in the ordinary intercourse of life, he may and ought to recommend religion to the adoption of his fellow-men. Nor is he circumscribed in the choice of safe, and even profitable amusements. The delights of social intercourse, the creative wonders of the pencil, the moral inspiration of the poet, and that voice of melody which transports the spirit from the visible to the invisible world, — these are all within his range; and these may all be made subservient to the highest duties of his calling. But, on this subject, I cannot more properly express myself, than in the words of a prelate, venerated and venerable through a long and useful life; and who, being dead, yet speaketh, in his instructive and edifying works. ‘Christianity, though it forbids excess in our pleasures, yet multiplies the number of them; and disposes the mind to receive entertainment from a variety of objects and pursuits, which to the gay part of mankind are absolutely flat and insipid. To a body in perfect health, the plainest food is relishing, and to a soul rightly harmonized by religion, every thing affords delight. Rural retirement, domestic tran-

quillity, friendly conversation, literary pursuits, philosophical inquiries, works of genius and imagination; nay, even the silent beauties of unadorned nature, a bright day, a still evening, a starry hemisphere, are sources of unadulterated pleasure, to those whose taste is not vitiated by criminal indulgencies, or debased by trifling ones. And when from these you rise to the still more rational and manly delights of virtue; to that self-congratulation which springs up in the soul, from the consciousness of having used your best endeavours to act up to the precepts of the Gospel; of having done your utmost, with the help of Divine Grace, to correct your infirmities, to subdue your passions, to improve your understandings, to exalt and purify your affections, to promote the welfare of all within your reach, to love and obey your Maker and your Redeemer, —then is human happiness wound up to its utmost pitch; and this world has no higher gratifications to give¹.

And now, my Reverend Brethren, let us with one mind, and one spirit, address Almighty God in prayer: ‘that, by the mediation of our only Saviour Jesus Christ, and through the heavenly assistance of the Holy Ghost, by daily reading and weighing of the Scriptures, we may wax

¹ Bishop Porteus. Sermons, Vol. I. Sermon xiv. p. 344.

riper and stronger in our ministry; and that we may so endeavour ourselves from time to time, to sanctify the lives of us and ours, and to fashion them after the rule and doctrine of Christ, that we may be wholesome and godly examples and patterns for the people to follow.' Amen!

NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

(1) Page 357.] 'My next advice shall be to those who are already in orders, that they will, at least four times a year, on the Ordination Sundays, read over the offices of the degrees of the Church in which they are ; and will particularly consider the charge that was given, and the answers that were made by them ; and then ask themselves, as before God, who will judge them at the great day upon their religious performance of them, whether they have been true to them or not : that so, they may humble themselves for their errors and omissions, and may renew their vows for the future, and so to be going on, from quarter to quarter, through the whole course of their ministry, observing still, what ground they gain, and what progress they make.' — Bishop Burnet. *Pastoral Care*. chap. vi.

I will add, that, for the use of those who review their ordination vows, the offices for the ordering of deacons and priests have been lately published by Mr. Brewster, with a running commentary. Clergymen of all ages will find this a most useful manual. The Title of the Work is, 'Practical Reflections on the Ordination Services,' &c. &c. by John Brewster, M.A. Rivingtons, London, 1817.

Since the original publication of this charge, has appeared a work, from which I am glad further to enforce this recommendation.

'It was a wise constitution of the fourteenth century, that the highest of our ecclesiastical functionaries should take care to have their form of consecration read over to them, twice

faithful unto death, he shall receive a crown of life, from the Captain of his salvation.'—Charge to the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of Stow, by Henry Vincent Bayley, D.D., Archdeacon of Stow. pp. 29—31.

(2) Page 359.] 'It is the character of true wisdom, to defer to primitive, concurrent, universal, Church authority. As men, such deference in us would be sound sense; as churchmen, we are conscientiously constrained to yield such deference. The members must be governed by the spirit of the body to which they belong: and the Church of England defers to authority, as well as to Scripture. She acknowledges the Church to be 'a witness and keeper of holy writ;' in which characters it possesses an authority, which, as Bishop Burnet expresses it, is 'an authority of order, for the maintaining of union and edification.' The Church is a keeper of holy writ; preserving it from age to age, in incorrupt purity, as the Jews of old were depositaries of the living oracles of God: and she is a witness of holy writ, as bearing a continued and uniform testimony, from age to age, both that they were so preserved, and by the Church so interpreted. It is this double reference, to Scripture, and to authority, that distinguishes the Church of England, both from the Roman, and from every other reformed church. It is a peculiarity of faith, that belongs to all her members; to the laity, as well as the ecclesiastics. You cannot throw off the obligation of this double reference, without rejecting the distinctness of your church character.

'The maxim that the Bible, and the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants, must be understood to apply to the Church of England with a degree of reservation. It is true, so far as this; that she maintains no doctrine, which has not the authority of God's inspired word. The Bible, therefore, is her religion. She derives all obligatory matter of faith, that is, to use her own expression, all that is to be believed for necessity of salvation, from the Scriptures alone; and

herein she differs from the Church of Rome. 'But she systematically resorts to the concurrent sense of the universal Church, both for assistance in the interpretation of the sacred text, and for guidance in those matters of religion which the text has left at large; and herein she differs from every other reformed communion. Her rule is, that, *that* shall be the standard of her belief still, which has been believed in the universal Church from the first, at all times, in all places, and by all the faithful.

'This body of universal orthodox belief, the Church of England has collected together, in her incomparable Liturgy. It is derived in most part, from the actual forms, and it accords, in all parts, with the spirit and feeling, of Christian antiquity. To this standard of our worship, we may confidently refer, in all doubtful cases, as to an explanatory standard of our Church's belief. It is not too much to say, that the Liturgy is the Church of England's authoritative commentary on the Bible.' — The principle of Ecclesiastical Order explained and enforced. By the Rev. James J. Hornby, M.A., Rector of Winwick, pp. 28—30.

'Well, indeed, has it been said, that, in these days, our fate is like that of the rebuilders of Jerusalem; with one of their hands, they were to work in the building, with the other, to hold a weapon of defence. Look, then, I beseech you, at the conflict and storm of religious opinions; at the facility with which error, as we believe, most pernicious, is generated; the zeal and earnestness, with which it is propagated. Look, (if, indeed, it be necessary to add any thing of a temporary nature, to arguments, which, resting on the imperfect constitution of man's nature, are as enduring as he is,)—look, I say, to the present diffusion of superficial information, mistaken by the wretched weakness of enthusiasts, for a general increase of real knowledge; look at the pitiable combination, of vanity, suggesting the examination of every subject, however deep and difficult; and of ignorance, on every subject, involving itself in error and mistake. Look, again, to the

corruptions of primitive truth, the stains on her fair beauty ; look to the activity and virulence of open or insidious hostility to all religion, and remember, that it is our task to defend religion, in all her extent, against the ingenious sophistry, with which error is insinuated ; the hardihood, with which evidence is rejected ; the doubts, with which the genuineness of Scripture is assailed ; and the perverseness, by which it is misinterpreted. See, then, at once, how wide a field of necessary knowledge presents itself. We are appointed, to teach the faith deduced from Scripture, by an especial Church ; and we are, therefore, bound to ascertain, what that faith is, and to rescue ourselves from the misrepresentations of adversaries, who impute to us opinions which we do not hold, or conceal those which we do. And this must be done, by a painful and careful examination of the writings and opinions of the founders of the Church, and by a far, far more careful examination, of Scripture itself. Handed down to us from distant ages, and written in foreign tongues, how shall we excuse ourselves, if we neglect, in some degree, to make ourselves masters of its criticism and interpretation ; so that, on the one hand, we may be able, to admit or refute, on solid grounds, the arguments which impugn the genuineness of any part of it ; and that, on the other, we may not be misled by an ignorance of the real principles of interpretation, into folly and falsehood. But these principles cannot be gained, without the study of authors, and no such study can be too extensive ; nay, this one word *Interpretation*, of itself, implies, as it were, an encyclopædia of knowledge ; a knowledge, comprehending the most entire, and most familiar acquaintance, with the history and customs of every ancient nation. Nor, even then, is this part of our task accomplished. In the certainty, that, as the water which first rises from the spring, is clearer than that, which, in a lengthened course, has mixed itself with the soil of the channel, so, the first ages of the Church were the purest, we must hardly acquiesce in any interpret-

ation of Scripture doctrine, till we know whether it has received a sanction from the voice of the Primitive Church; a knowledge, which cannot be gained, but by long and extensive study. We must, indeed, as our Saviour himself has told us, if we are "scribes instructed into the kingdom of heaven, be like the householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure, things new and old."—Discourses before the University of Cambridge: in April, 1826, by Hugh James Rose, B. D.

(3) Page 360.] This division does not pretend to be scientific: and in another place, and for another purpose, the first branch of it would require a distribution into its subordinate parts. Scientific arrangement may, however, be carried too far; and it is lamentable, when the weightier concerns of religion are sacrificed to the rage for systematizing. Long habituated, and cordially attached, to *home-spun* divinity, I do not scruple to say, that, for the sound and manly institution of a theological student, *any* classification of *any* one of our great standard, Church-of-England divines, is, in my judgment, far preferable to *that* Classification, of German origin, which a Divinity Professor of great name, and, doubtless, of considerable attainments, has attempted (with what success I cannot pronounce) to naturalize amongst us. The Professor in question was by no means happy, either in the matter, or the manner, of his animadversions on the list of books recommended by the truly learned Bishop Cleaver, to the younger clergy. And I regret to observe, that the first division in the arrangement of that exemplary Prelate, has been *wholly omitted*, in the more elaborate distribution of Bishop Marsh,—the important topic of "PRACTICAL AND PASTORAL DUTIES."

Many books cannot here be recommended. But I would advise the younger clergy, and candidates for holy orders, to acquaint themselves, in an early stage of their critical researches, with 'Horne's Introduction to the Study of the Scripture;' a work which, in itself, comprizes a body of critical

theology; and which introduces the reader to the best sources of information.

Respecting the ministerial character and duties, an admirable collection of Tracts was published at Oxford, in the year 1807, from the Clarendon Press, by Doctor Randolph, then Regius Professor of Divinity, subsequently Bishop of London, under the title of *The Clergyman's Instructor*. This volume contains—Herbert's Country Parson; Bishop Jeremy Taylor's Rules and Advices to his Clergy; Bishop Burnet on the Pastoral Law; Bishop Sprat's Discourse to his Clergy; Bishop Bull's Companion for the Candidates of Holy Orders; Bishop Gibson's Directions to the Clergy of the Diocese of London; Archbishop Hort's Instructions to the Clergy of the Diocese of Tuam; and Doctor Stearne's *Tractatus de Visitatione Infermorum*.—This collection ought to be always in the possession, and often in the hands, of every parish minister. He who studies it with care, can never be at a loss, how he ought to live, and how to teach; and he who brings his affections to the study, can scarcely fail both to teach and to live, as he ought.

On the subject of practical reading, I must be very brief. Holy Scripture, above all other books, is to be read, as Bishop Burnet expresses himself, 'with a view to practice; to raise devotion, to increase piety, and to give good thoughts.' To this should be added, such works as Lucas's Practical Christianity, Lucas on Happiness, Scougal's Works, Worthington on Self-resignation, Howe's (Charles) Meditations, and Select Discourses, by John Smith of Cambridge,—lately very beautifully and accurately reprinted in 8vo. by Messrs. Rivingtons and Cochran. 'I shall add one small book more,' it is Bishop Burnet who again speaks, 'which is to me ever new and fresh, gives always good thoughts, and a noble temper;—Thomas à Kempis of the Imitation of Christ. By the frequent reading of these books, by the relish that one has in them, by the delight they give, and the effects they produce, a man will plainly perceive, whether his soul is made for divine matters or not; what suitableness there is between

him and them; and whether he is yet touched with such a sense of religion, as to be capable of dedicating himself to it. —Past. Care, chap. vii.

The lives of good men are an invaluable portion of the Clergyman's Library. And here I would particularly name Bishop Burnet's *Lives of Bedel and Sir Matthew Hale*; with his incomparable Sermon on the death of Robert Boyle. Wordsworth's *Ecclesiastical Biography*. And, very particularly, Izaak Walton's *Lives of Doctor Donne, Sir Henry Wotton, Richard Hooker, George Herbert, and Bishop Sanderson*, as edited with copious and instructive notes, in a single volume by the late Dr. Zouch. Archdeacon Churton, in his account of that acute divine, good man, and exemplary parish priest, the late Dr. Townson, informs us, that during his last illness, he read Mr. Herbert's, 'Country Parson,' together with 'Walton's *Lives of George Herbert, &c.*, with a view, no doubt, to trim his lamp, and prepare for his Lord, by comparing his conduct with the examples of those meek and holy men.'

(4) Page 368.] 'By catechising, under heaven, was planted the Apostolical Church; by catechising, the sound of the Gospel was sent forth into all lands: it was a chief instrument of preserving catholicity throughout Christendom, and of establishing the reformation in England: it has always been the vital spirit of education, milk to the babe, and strong meat to the youth; a main preventive of infidelity and enthusiasm; a guide at once, and a measure, of morality and virtue. Do the times, then, no longer require it? Far other is the case. Much of that ignorant impatience of discipline; that ever-learning, and never being able to come to the knowledge of the truth; that heartless indifference, which usurps the name of liberality; and that licentiousness of self-will, which marks the latter days, as it disgraced the worst period, perhaps, of our annals, — much of all this, as well as of viciousness of life, and of error in religion, is owing to 'ungroundedness in the points of catechism.'

'Equally fallacious is the notion, that Sunday-schools, and more especially the national system, preclude its use, or remove the minister's responsibility. No; I look, indeed, upon this invention, as more pregnant with consequences to the mortal and immortal interests of mankind, than any discovery, perhaps, since that of printing. But, one of the great objects, one of the prime merits, of both institutions, is to train and prepare the rising generation for the hands of the clergyman; to facilitate thereby his labour, and to make the necessity of public exhibition less frequent. But still, his constant supervisal, and personal direction, of the whole machinery, are equally or more than ever demanded; they are, I had nearly said, all in all. Through him, moreover, the children are to profess in the Church, what they have been taught in the school: and he is bound, not merely to listen to a cold and formal repetition, but also, in the fullest sense of the term, 'to examine and to instruct.' A task, this, not to be lightly deemed of! The chair of the catechist of old, was filled by the highest authorities, the finest talents, and the deepest learning: and he that would duly qualify himself, who, whilst he is exercising the memories of boyhood, would also seek to warm the affections, and enlighten the understanding, must add to Biblical knowledge, the study of the heart and the investigation of the mind: he must read the living book of human nature. Instruction, so prepared and so conveyed, will never produce listlessness; to the congregation at large it is very attractive; to the relatives, in particular, it seems to carry with it something of parental interest: and the admonitions which are directly addressed to the young, find their way, obliquely indeed, but often more effectually, to the bosoms of the old.

'What less can be said, what more need be added, on a point so plain and so essential? From the earliest to the present day, the Fathers of our Church, a cloud of witnesses, have never ceased to urge it, with all the force of reason, and eloquence, and authority. Let their collective wisdom be represented, by the touching appeal of Bishop Hall; 'The

most usefull of all preaching is catechetical; this being the grounds, the other raiseth the walls and roofe; this informes the judgement, that stirres up the affections. What good use is there of those affections that runne before the judgement? or of those walls that want a foundation? For my part, I have spent the greater halfe of my life in this station of our holy service. I thanke God, not unpainfully, not unprofitably. But there is no one thing of which I repent so much, as not to have bestowed more houres in this publicke exercise of catechisme; in regard thereof I would quarrell with my very sermons; and wish that a great part of them had been exchanged for this preaching conference. Those other divine discourses enrich the braine and the tongue; this settles the heart; those others are but the descants to this plaine song. Contemne it not, my brethren, for the easie and noted homelinessse; the most excellent, and most beneficiall things are most familiar.' — Archdeacon Bayley's Charge, pp. 18—20.

(5) Page 372.] To candidates for orders, and to the clergy of this diocese in general, I would strongly recommend the following works, which are easily procurable. 'Wheatley's Rational Illustration of the Book of Common Prayer.' 8vo. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1802. 'Shepherd's Critical and Practical Elucidation of the Morning and Evening Prayer.' 8vo. London. 'Bishop Mant's Edition of the Book of Common Prayer, with Notes, explanatory, critical, and historical.' 4to. London, 1820. And the same learned prelate's third Charge to the Clergy of the diocese of Killaloe, entitled, 'The Rule of Ministerial Duty enforced and illustrated.' Dublin, 1822.

(6) Page 374.] I would here observe, that it is the bounden duty of parish ministers, first, by the regularity of their own attendance, and then, by friendly advice and exhortation, to procure regularity of attendance, before the commencement of divine service, on the part of their parishioners. They will recollect, too, that not only the minister and the clerk, but

the people also have a part of the service to perform. Congregations ought to be carefully instructed, in what portions of our Common Prayer they are required audibly to join. And an attention to this particular, will much contribute to keep the people alive and awake to the solemn purpose for which they are assembled. In many instances, too, it will be necessary to instruct the congregation where they are to be silent. Some, for example, are apt to repeat, after the minister, the absolution and commandments.

(7) Page 377.] In country Churches, it is too frequently the case, that the clergyman walks up the aisle in spattered boots, and puts on his clerical dress in the reading desk, before the people. No plan for a new Church shall have my approbation, which does not include a Vestry-room. Those Churches which at present want this accommodation, should, with all convenient speed, be provided with it. And, in the interim, the porch, rather than the desk, should be used for the purpose of robing.

(8) Page 384.] There is another service, to be performed with little trouble, and for which the poor are particularly grateful. Many of them have had relatives in the Army and Navy, respecting the Recovery of whose arrears, and other property, they are frequently at a loss. The greatest facilities are indeed afforded at the War and Navy Offices; and it is a noble trait in the British government, that, in these departments, the letter of the humblest peasant is answered without delay. But our poor are indifferent scribes: and the clergy may render them essential benefit, by conducting their correspondence on occasions of this kind; the more particularly, as they are, at present, too frequently imposed upon, by those who write for hire.

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